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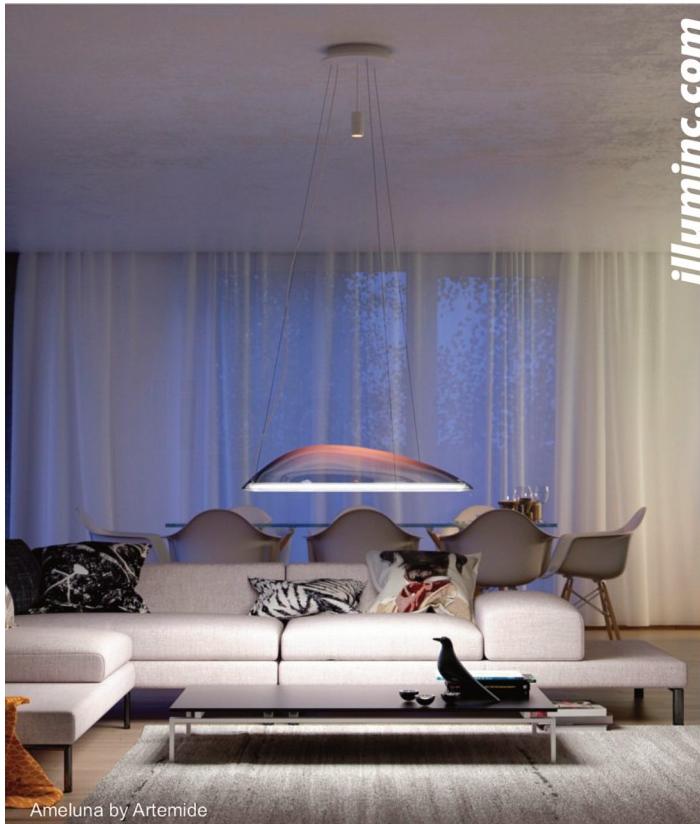
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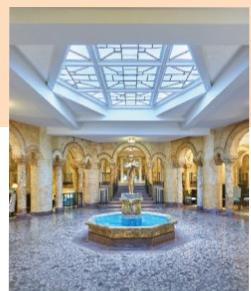
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ON THE COVER: Staircase in a renovated house on Cox's Row in Georgetown,
by Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Architect.
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SMARTER TOGETHER



Bradley W. Johnson

I've been thinking a lot lately about how we learn, because I'm developing an exhibition for our gallery at the District Architecture Center that will focus on new school buildings in Washington, and how the designs of schools over time, both here and around the country, reflect the ebb and flow of educational theories.

As I have been researching the exhibition, one theme that has jumped out is just how much education historically has involved separating some students from others. That might not be true of traditional one-room schoolhouses, but the growth of cities and the application of the Industrial Revolution's factory model of organization to education led to larger schools where students historically were separated into

groups in any number of ways—by age bracket, grade level, assessed degree of ability, assigned vocational track, gender, and, yes, race. Segregation by race was declared unconstitutional more than 60 years ago, but education today still features many other forms of separation, including a number of those just listed, as well as additional dimensions of separation that students create for themselves, such as the cliques that we all remember from high school. (What group did you belong to?)

Welcome!

In more recent years, some schools have challenged these forms of separation, leading to things such as garden classrooms, which we have featured in some of our previous issues. Schools are built as centers of learning, of course, but in the educational theories that underpin their design, they also act as mirrors we hold up to ourselves, telling us something about our society at large. We hope to explore some of that mirroring effect in the exhibition we are developing for our gallery.

The District Architecture Center itself is a multi-level center of learning, with students ranging from youngsters who come to do projects in our children's programs, to adults who participate in Architecture Month or visit our exhibitions, to young and mid-career professionals, to Fellows of the AIA who are in the capstone stages of their careers. And the learning goes both ways, with teachers and group leaders learning all kinds of things from their charges. The District Architecture Center has benefitted immensely from that two-way learning, and we constantly use it to improve our programming.

We like to think of ourselves as an open and inclusive learning organization, and the forms that can take can sometimes be surprising, even to other architects. Not long ago, a class of students from the University of the District of Columbia dropped by to talk with me about why they might want to consider joining AIA. In my conversation with them, I mentioned the many committees we have here at the Center for professionals, covering topics such as technology and design for wellbeing, and suggested that joining one of these committees would be a great way to help start their careers. The professor of the class, Raj Barr-Kumar, FAIA, stopped me at that point. "Students can join committees?" he asked. "That's new!" But why not? Young, energetic students have been some of our best volunteers, and it's a way for them to get involved with local professionals right away.

Professional societies traditionally have held themselves consciously apart from the rest of society. But that model increasingly doesn't work well in many fields, including architecture. The best new designs today involve architects listening to, and working closely with, clients, engineers, builders, surrounding communities, and others. That idea that AIA should hold itself separate and apart is as outdated as the *Fountainhead*'s Howard Roark. The rarified image of architecture reflected in that approach increasingly does not reflect how architecture and building are now being accomplished. It's a cracked mirror for today's world.

The future of AIA looks more like the District Architecture Center, with people of all ages and all walks of life learning together with the aim of making the world a better place.

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue, which is our annual issue devoted to residential design. Please feel free to drop me a line if you have any comments.

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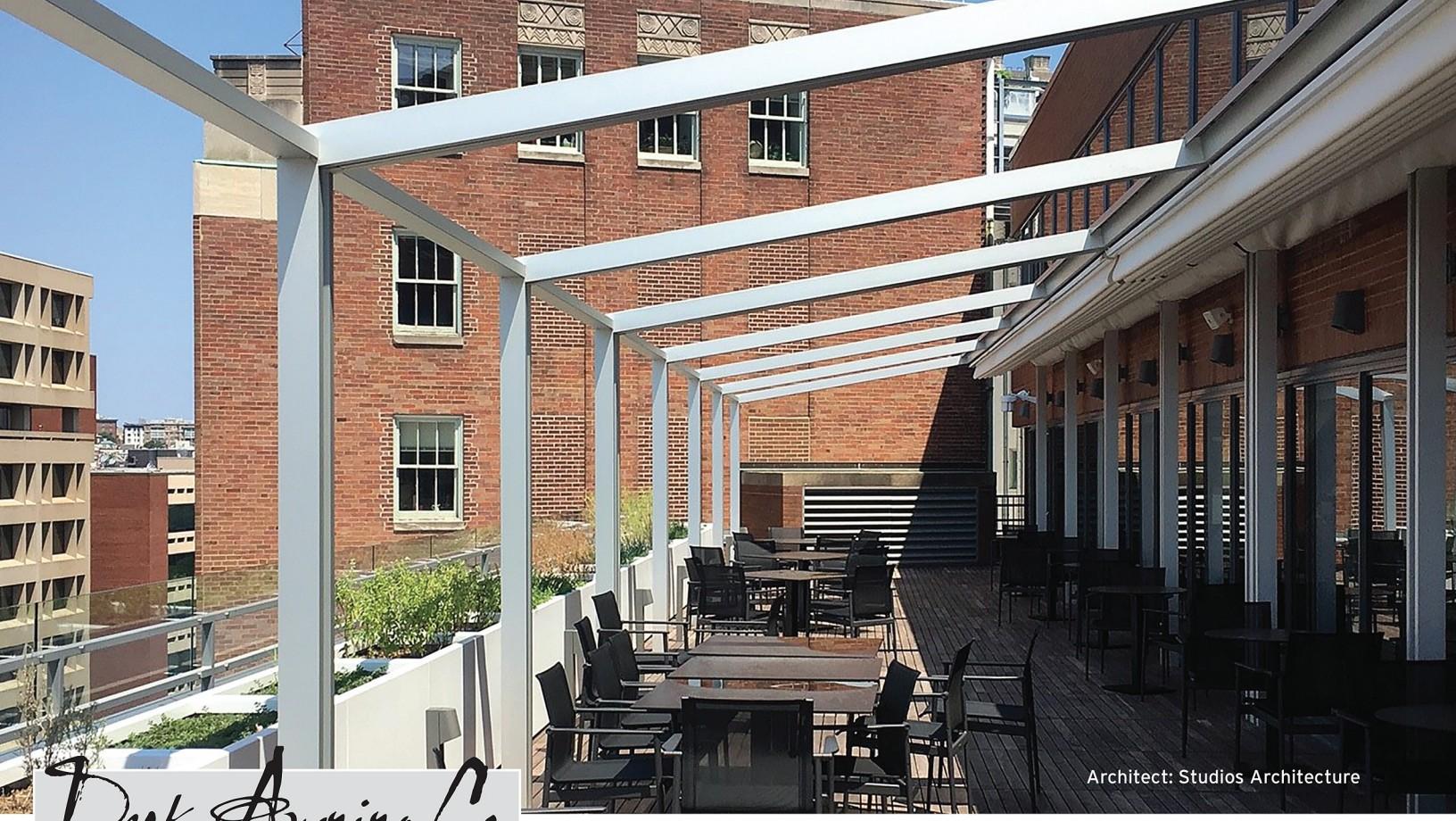
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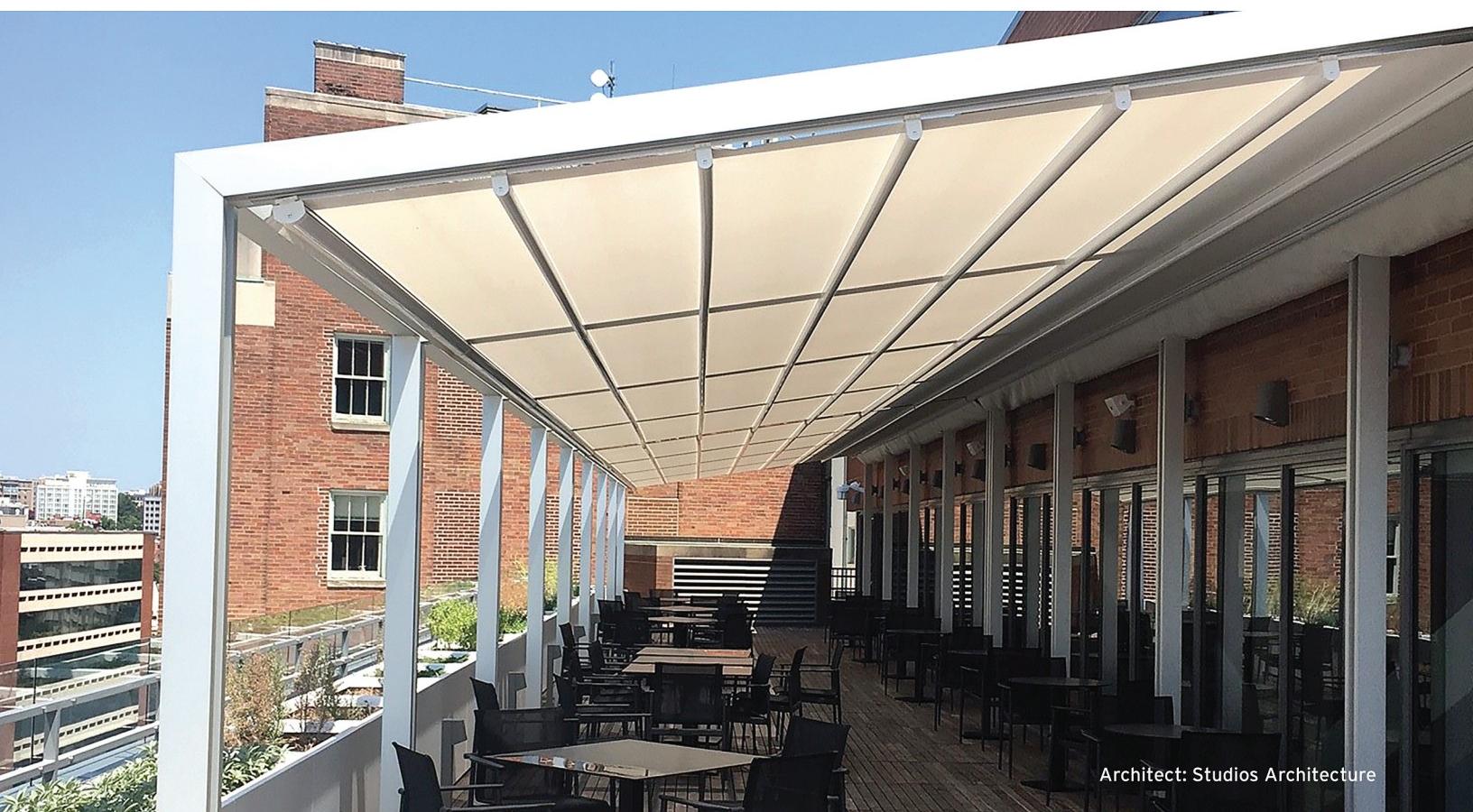
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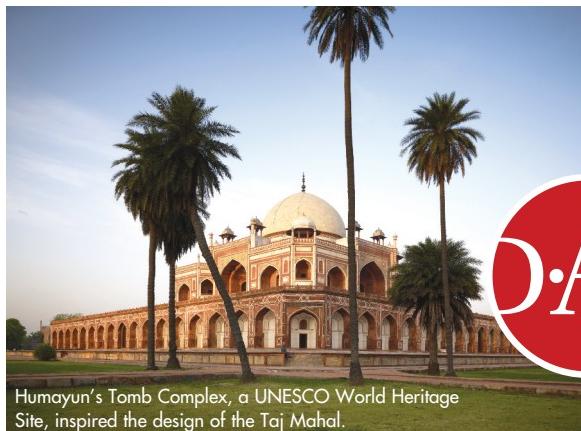
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Humayun's Tomb Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, inspired the design of the Taj Mahal.

Photo by Christian Richters

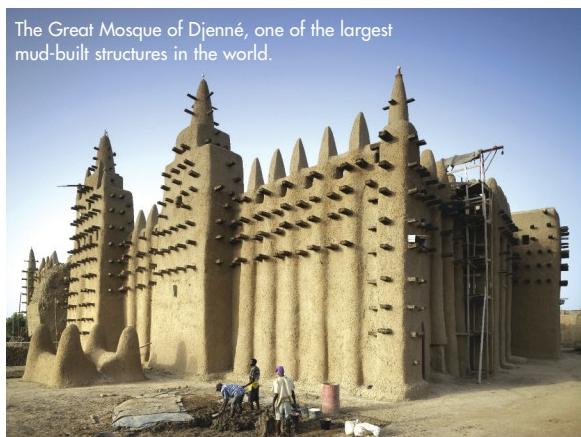
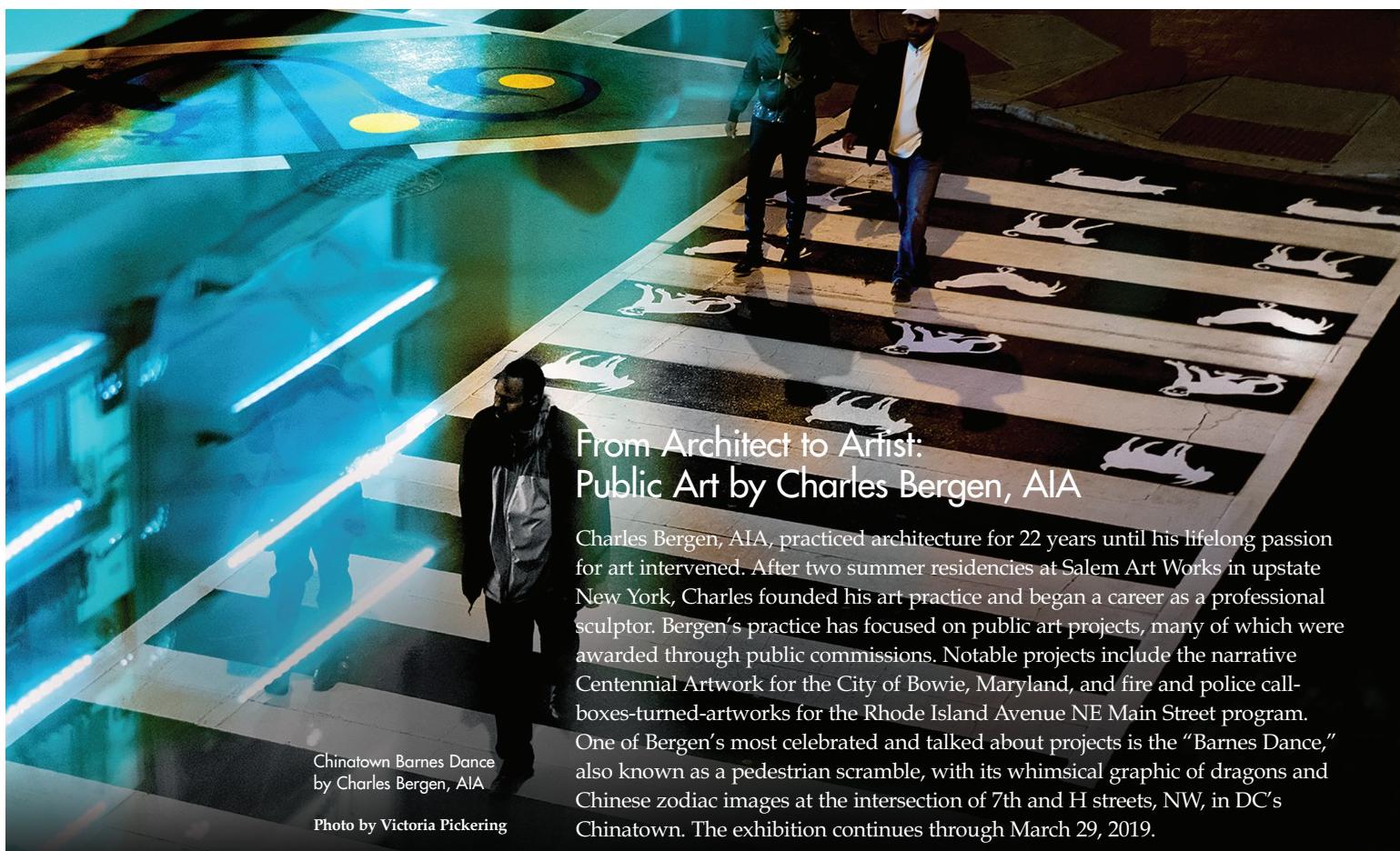


Photo by Christian Richters

At the DAC

Transforming Cities, Transforming Lives: The Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme

This exhibition features 27 regeneration projects from nine countries that demonstrate how culture can have a positive impact well beyond conservation. These projects promote good governance, growth of civil society, rise in incomes and economic opportunities, greater respect for human rights, and better stewardship of the environment—even in the poorest and most remote areas of the globe. While some projects are completed, those that remain in progress go beyond mere technical restoration to address the questions of social and environmental context, adaptive re-use, institutional sustainability, and training. The exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Aga Khan Council for the United States and will be on view until March 29, 2019.



From Architect to Artist: Public Art by Charles Bergen, AIA

Charles Bergen, AIA, practiced architecture for 22 years until his lifelong passion for art intervened. After two summer residencies at Salem Art Works in upstate New York, Charles founded his art practice and began a career as a professional sculptor. Bergen's practice has focused on public art projects, many of which were awarded through public commissions. Notable projects include the narrative Centennial Artwork for the City of Bowie, Maryland, and fire and police call-boxes-turned-artworks for the Rhode Island Avenue NE Main Street program. One of Bergen's most celebrated and talked about projects is the "Barnes Dance," also known as a pedestrian scramble, with its whimsical graphic of dragons and Chinese zodiac images at the intersection of 7th and H streets, NW, in DC's Chinatown. The exhibition continues through March 29, 2019.

Chinatown Barnes Dance
by Charles Bergen, AIA

Photo by Victoria Pickering

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Living area in the renovated house
on Cox's Row.

Federal Case

Georgetown Renovation Weighs History and Modernity

by Steven K. Dickens, AIA, LEED AP





Project: Renovation on Cox's Row,
Washington, DC

Architects: **Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Architect**

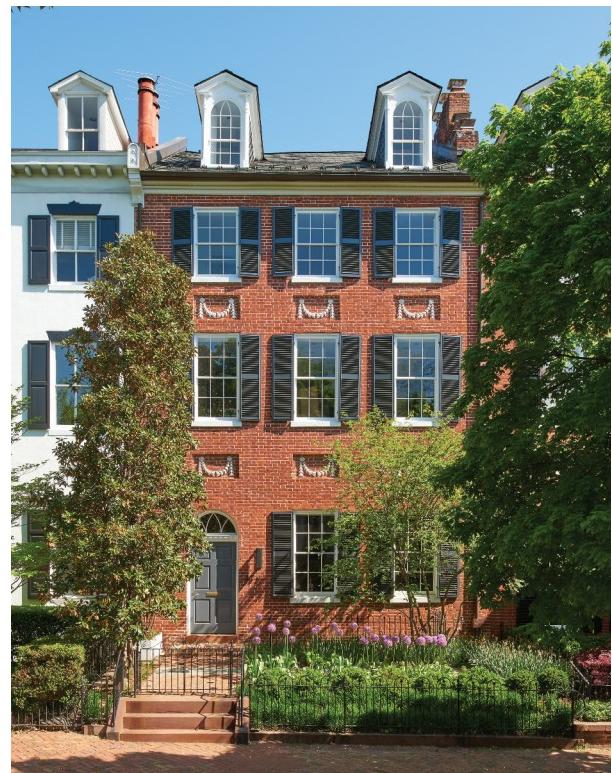
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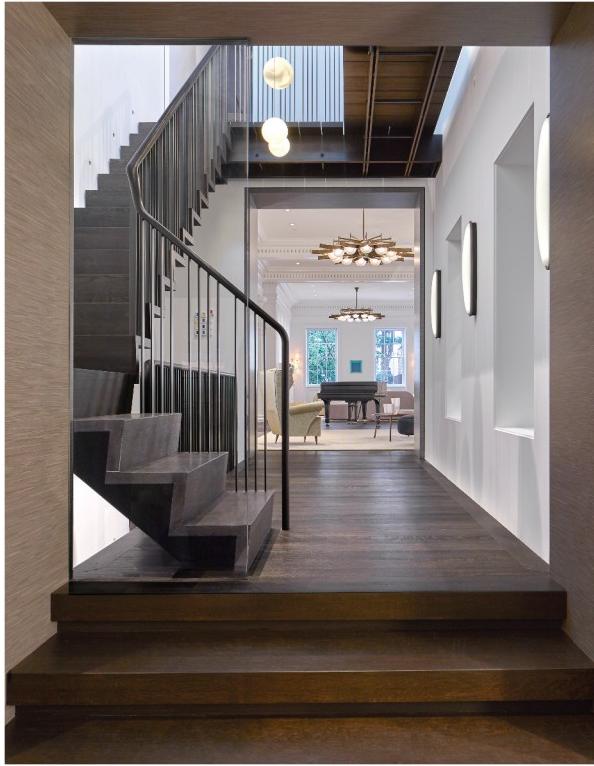
Front façade.

"They don't mess around," said **Robert M. Gurney, FAIA**, of his clients for a substantial renovation of a large row house on Cox's Row, one of the most historic Federal-style groupings in Georgetown. "They want—and have—the finest of *everything*, including a summer house in Cape Cod by a famous and admired architect. I was honored to be hired for their main residence."

In this case, *everything* includes the architecture of the circa 1820 row house, certainly, but also the new architecture of the renovation, a top-notch art collection, and sumptuous furnishings. The clients were classic empty nesters, still living in a comfortable house where they raised their family, but ready for another chapter in their lives. The pedestrian convenience of Georgetown was a big draw, but so were the high ceilings and large wall surfaces of the row house—much better for art display than the walls of their detached house.

Although known for very striking, highly modern new houses—often in sylvan settings devoid of serious contextual constraints—Gurney has previously done renovations in tight urban settings, including several in Georgetown. "What's critical is to strike the balance between the old and new," he said. Balance is what melds the eclectic parts into a unified and serene whole. Sometimes the new elements are clearly discrete additions, completely surrounded by the old, but in most areas, more complex blending occurs.

Perhaps not surprisingly for a 120-foot deep row house, the structure had two stairways: a grand stair serving the four-story front block of the house and a smaller stair serving the two-story rear wing. Peculiarly, however, the second floor didn't connect through. And unfortunately, the rear stair cut off the kitchen from the



Main stairwell.

dining and living rooms. Gurney's biggest intervention was to create a new stair hall, which in one stroke unites the second floor, opens the kitchen, and provides the most luminous and completely modern space in the house. The roof over this space was raised a bit to allow a clerestory that provides dramatic daylighting; the new stair itself is a meticulously designed and crafted work of art, comfortable in the company of paintings by big-name modern artists.

The relocation of the rear stair allowed the dining room to expand to a size suitable for large-scale entertaining, and it now opens to the generous kitchen and walled patio at the rear via two wide, pivoting door panels. But the expansion also left the fireplace off center. It thus came to match the two fireplaces in the double parlor, which were also off center of their respective spaces. Gurney responded by extending differing combinations of the chimney throats, surrounds, hearthstones, and mantles. In each case, the overall element renders the space symmetrical, even though the fireplaces themselves, historic elements unable to be shifted, remain off-center. Each is a marvelous piece of abstract composition, and conveniently provides premier spaces for artwork that often features similar interplays between regularity and irregularity.

At every turn, old and new play off one another in unexpected ways. For example, the existing wood floors at the upper levels have significant gaps between the planks. The planks are worn and have shrunken somewhat over centuries of use. As is common in very old houses, there is no subfloor (that is, the planks sit directly on the joists, instead of on a sheet of plywood or diagonal boards), meaning that the spaces between the planks are black



Kitchen.

voids. The floor boards might seem like obvious candidates for replacement, but here, painted a dark gray and cleaned up somewhat, they authentically display the history of the house. Perhaps surprisingly, they also help to integrate the modern interventions, thanks to the visual parallel between the dark shadows between the planks and the detailing of the classic reveals that Gurney routinely uses for wall panels and millwork. In this house, there are multiple places where the dark shadow of a base reveal elides with the shadows in the gaps between the planks.

A bridge at the upper level of the new stair hall uses new planks, painted the same dark gray, placed slightly apart. It's obviously new—the planks aren't worn or irregular, and they rest on exposed black steel runners—yet provides an unmistakable homage to the original.

This is a large and luxurious residence, with a focus on aesthetics and craft, but sustainability was not forgotten. Foamed insulation was added to the extent possible, and the entire HVAC system was replaced with the highest-efficiency system available. All new windows have insulated glass units, and all new wood is certified as coming from sustainably-managed forests. A small but significant move was to add dampers to the chimneys to keep conditioned air from literally going up the chimney—this makes a noticeable difference in a house that has seven fireplaces.

Underlying the particular green moves was a general commitment not to renovate simply for the sake of renovating. This manifests in the preserved wood plank floors mentioned above, wood trim throughout the house, and most spaces at the third and fourth floors, where aesthetic cohesion and needed upgrades were provided via fairly minor refinements. That said, some of the



Second floor office.



Fireplace in the main living area.



Dining room.



Main living space before the renovation.

Photo © Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Architect

least-sustainable elements in the house could not be upgraded legally: The Old Georgetown Board, which has design review authority over the neighborhood, forbids replacement of street-facing windows, which, Gurney noted, also entails retaining the surrounds and trim, and in turn the uninsulated plaster-on-brick walls. Fortunately, however, this applied only to the front façade, which represents a modest percentage of the exterior exposure of the house.

There is also a perhaps unexpected focus on livability. “Our work is always based in functionality,” averred Gurney. In this project, creating an appropriate setting for top-level art counted as a functional need, but it extends much further. The grandly-sized formal entertaining and art display spaces are complemented by more intimate family spaces, such as the attic-level den. A movie room and fitness center were carved out of previously-unfinished basement space. Closets and storage cabinetry are everywhere, and no point is distant from a bathroom, something that might be a problem in such a large house. The new laundry room not only has generous counter spaces and a built-in ironing board, but also an easy chair and television.

“Every project in my office has a team of two,” said Gurney, stressing that Kara McHone, AIA, the project architect for the row house, was “critical to every detail and decision.” But credit doesn’t stop there: “The client was great, the building was great, the contractor was great!” extolled Gurney. “The art is second to none,” and it has an obvious fraternity with Gurney’s signature style. Given such universal attention to quality, one feels confident about this historic house’s prospects for the next century. ■



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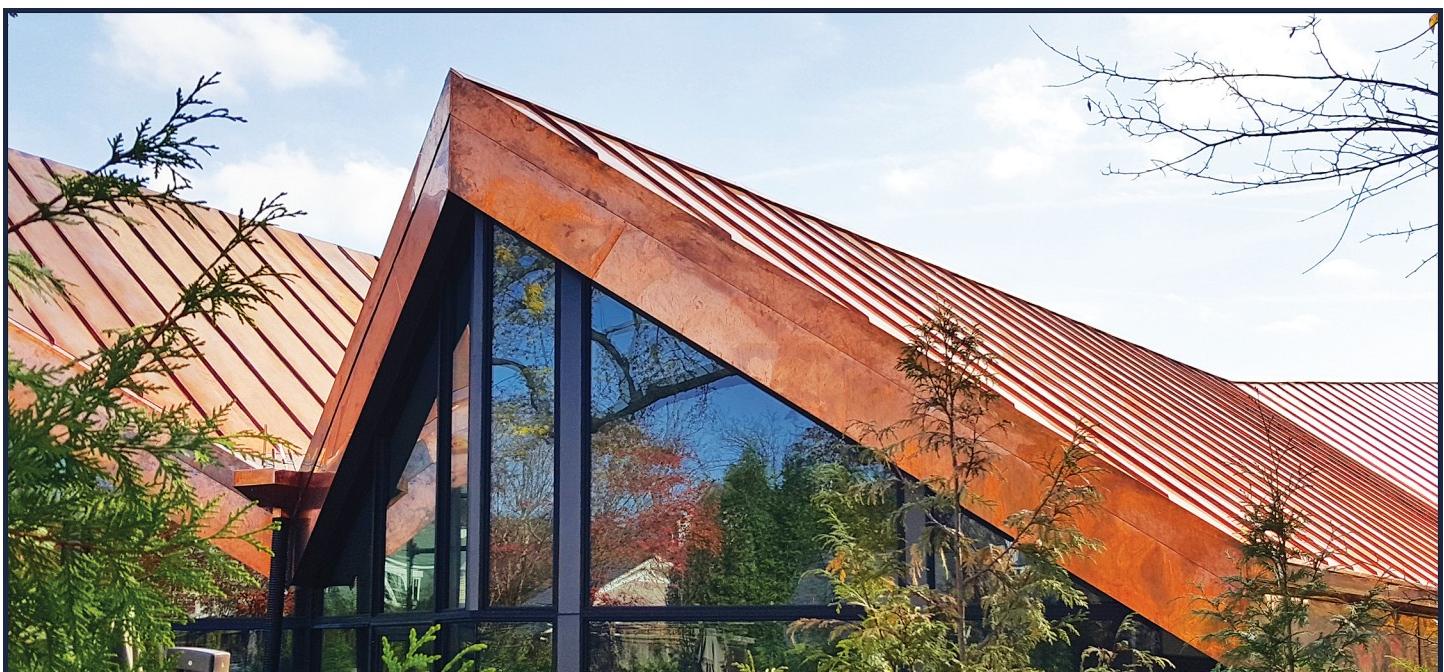


Featured in this issue:
“Federal Case: Georgetown Renovation
Weighs History and Modernity”

Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Architect
Anice Hoachlander, Photographer

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Rear of the renovated house.



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Not-So-Bungalow

A Modest House Breaks Out of its Shell

by Deane Madsen, Assoc. AIA

For Wakako Tokunaga, AIA, LEED AP, an architect who trained with Japanese alternative-materials guru Shigeru Ban, Hon. FAIA, and Washington's own residential architecture maven, Suzane Reatig, FAIA, the renovation of a Takoma Park bungalow was a welcome opportunity to merge distinct architectural eras, and to fuse her Japanese and American influences. From the street, the house still appears to be a typical 1920s structure. Inside, old gives way to new, culminating in a decidedly contemporary addition that transforms the house, in Tokunaga's mind, into a "not-so-bungalow."

Tokunaga, who runs **Wakako Tokunaga Architecture** out of her home office, met her clients at their children's pre-school. They had bought the house based on the charm of its nearly century-old base building, but quickly found that an earlier addition constructed by the previous owner was both too cramped and too dark for their needs. And one of the main



Front of the house.



Rear of the house before renovation.



Project: Not-So-Bungalow,

Takoma Park, MD

Architects: **Wakako Tokunaga Architecture**

Kitchen Cabinet Designers: **Purekitchen**

Structural Engineers: **MGV Consulting Structural Engineers**

Contractor: **Alan Hill Woodworking**

Dining area, with stairs leading to the main level.



Seating area next to the kitchen.

assets of the property, a shaded rear yard downhill of the street level, was blocked from view by the addition's walls.

Early in the design process, Tokunaga proposed demolition and replacement of the addition. Put simply, she would retain the original house, and add a minimalist, modern box that would supplant and expand upon the prior addition. In her vision, vertical bands of glazing in the back half of the house would admit more light while creating continuity between upstairs and downstairs. This straightforward but strategic intervention, combined with a new programmatic configuration,

would resolve the view issue while providing better use of space within the house.

The clients, both of whom had attended the Rhode Island School of Design, trusted Tokunaga's conceptual ideas from the beginning. "They very immediately had a great understanding of space, materials, and how things went together," she said. "When they came to me, they knew they wanted more light, and they wanted that connection between the back yard and the main level."

In the prior arrangement, the house's entry opened to a living room, but beyond it was a warren of smaller



View from the living room toward the rear, with exposed flooring and raw wall edges highlighting the expanded opening between rooms.

compartments including a dining room, the kitchen, and a short hallway connecting to a bedroom. Stairs downward also linked off the dining room, but led to a large storage area, off of which were another bedroom and a family room.

Tokunaga sought to maintain the original character of the bungalow while opening up the back half of the house to meet those initial client desires. Now, with several interior walls reduced and large sections of exterior walls replaced with windows, there's a direct sightline to the outdoors from the front of the house to its backyard. "As you enter the house, you're greeted by the wide

view of lush trees in the back," Tokunaga said. "There's a sun-filled living room, and the mezzanine looks down at the double-height dining below. On the lower level, we positioned a large open kitchen with a central island facing the dining room. That way, we were able to create the flow and an easier connection to the outside."

It was equally important to Tokunaga and her clients that the new parts of the house not attempt to mimic the patina of the original building, but rather stand on their own in a modern interpretation of residential space. The replacement addition eschews trim and molding for



Master bedroom.

clean lines and durable materials, such as concrete for the shared floor of the lower level kitchen, dining room, and artist studio. A plywood bench wraps two sides of the kitchen beneath energy-efficient windows overlooking the back yard.

Upstairs, the master suite's ceiling tilts up to receive clerestory daylight where the addition's roof shifts from pitched to flat. Wood flooring salvaged from the previous addition was reused in the new master bedroom on the northern half of the addition. Where openings between rooms were expanded, hints of the original layout remain where flooring once covered by partitions is now exposed. This uncovered flooring, along with the not-quite-perfect edges of the walls that have been tucked back, serve as visible reminders of the house's history. Perhaps this is where Tokunaga's background really shows through: The Japanese art form kintsugi, which uses gold lacquer to repair broken pieces of pottery, respects the mending process as much as the original form. Here, revealing the traces of the original building highlights the contrast between new and old.

However, unifying the two temporally distinct zones of the house provided its own challenge: "We were clear, the homeowners and myself, from day one that this would be a modern addition to this historic bungalow," Tokunaga said. Her upbringing in Japan, where new construction rises alongside millennia-old buildings, made it easy for her to feel comfortable with that dichotomy. "Culturally, we're not afraid of something that's not completely historic," she said. "But I also felt we needed something to tie that together."

During the demolition, the contractor, who had started out as a woodworker, removed Douglas fir studs that had darkened over time, and planed them for reuse in

the new portion of the house. The reclaimed wood is now a feature wall—installed by the clients themselves—that serves as a backdrop to the open-riser stairway where the old house merges with the new addition.

That level of client involvement, both in the construction and in the design process that preceded it, was a treat for Tokunaga, who operates as a solo practitioner. "I always felt that the best projects are where true collaboration takes place between the homeowners and myself," she said. So, when the clients suggested lowering a window to allow their child to be able to see who might be arriving in the driveway, she agreed, knowing first-hand what it's like to have young children at home. "Life turns upside-down," she said. "Going through that together, I could relate to what their needs might be and what the budget constraints mean."

For starters, budget constraints meant planning for a deck outside the living room that was value-engineered out during the construction process (it has since been installed). More broadly, Tokunaga was able to keep within budget by using limited but functional materials, and by keeping construction methods simple. The embrace of simplicity may be the defining characteristic of Tokunaga's work: "Our life is not so simple," she said. "So the container has to be this quiet haven."

With the rooms untangled and the views outside restored, Tokunaga has brought that poetic sensibility to the house in Takoma Park. The transitions between the original house and the new addition aren't seamless, but rather sewn together in a way that makes the seams themselves quietly reference the transformation process, with the family benefitting from the connections they'll continue to forge together. ☀



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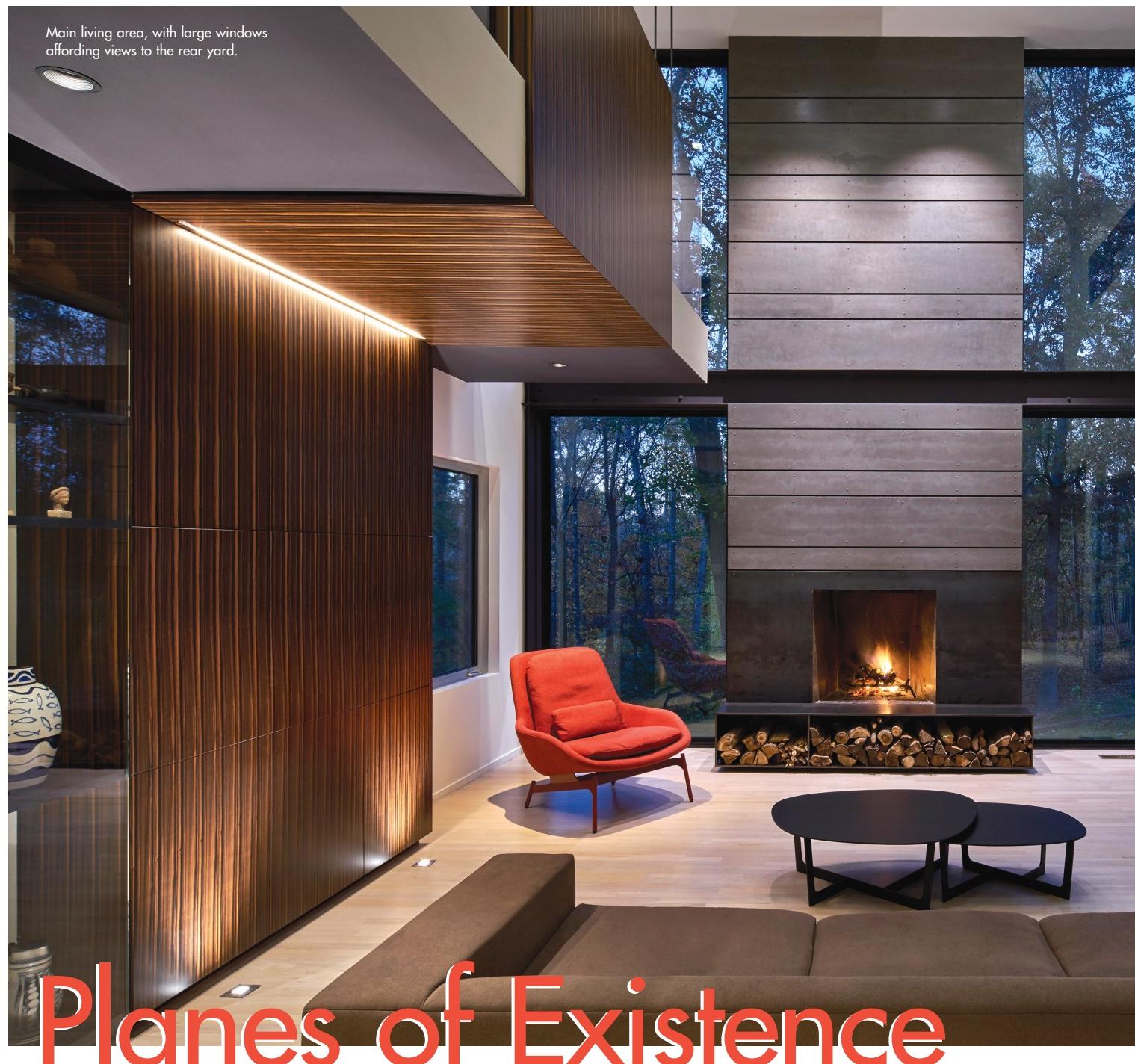


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Planes of Existence

KUBE Architecture Renovates a House to Take in the View

by Ronald O'Rourke

"This lot has a nice view out back. Let's ignore it!"

Well, the situation wasn't *that* bad. Not quite. But the 4,000-square-foot, four-bedroom house, located on a cul-de-sac at the end of Smoky Quartz Lane in Potomac, Maryland, took little advantage of the view of rolling, forested land offered by its site, which overlooks a part of Watts Branch Stream Valley Park.

KUBE Architecture's design for renovating the house fixed that problem—and then some.

Project: Smoky Quartz,
Potomac, MD

Architects: **KUBE Architecture**
Custom Steel Fabricators: **Elemental Metalworks**
Millwork and Kitchen Designers: **Mersoa Woodwork & Design**
Structural Engineers: **JZ Structural Consulting**
Contractor: **thinkmakebuild**



Photos © Greg Powers, except as noted

As built in 1985, the house's living room, which points toward the view, featured a ceiling that sloped from the center of the house down toward the fireplace at the rear wall. A pair of long skylights in the sloping ceiling brought some natural light into the space, but the design, far from embracing the view, seemed to ignore or even reject it. The owners—a couple with two daughters—wanted to address this key issue, and also felt that other aspects of the house's design were in need of an update.

"The clients wanted open and modern space," said **Richard Loosle-Ortega, RA**, a principal at KUBE. "They wanted views out to the rear forest, which were being hindered by small windows and the sloping roof in the main room." In addition, one of clients "is an avid cook, so she also wanted an updated, modern kitchen



Rear of the renovated house.



Rear of the house before renovation.

Photo by KUBE



Living area before renovation.

Photo by KUBE

that flowed to the rest of the house. And they wanted to update the exterior as much as possible."

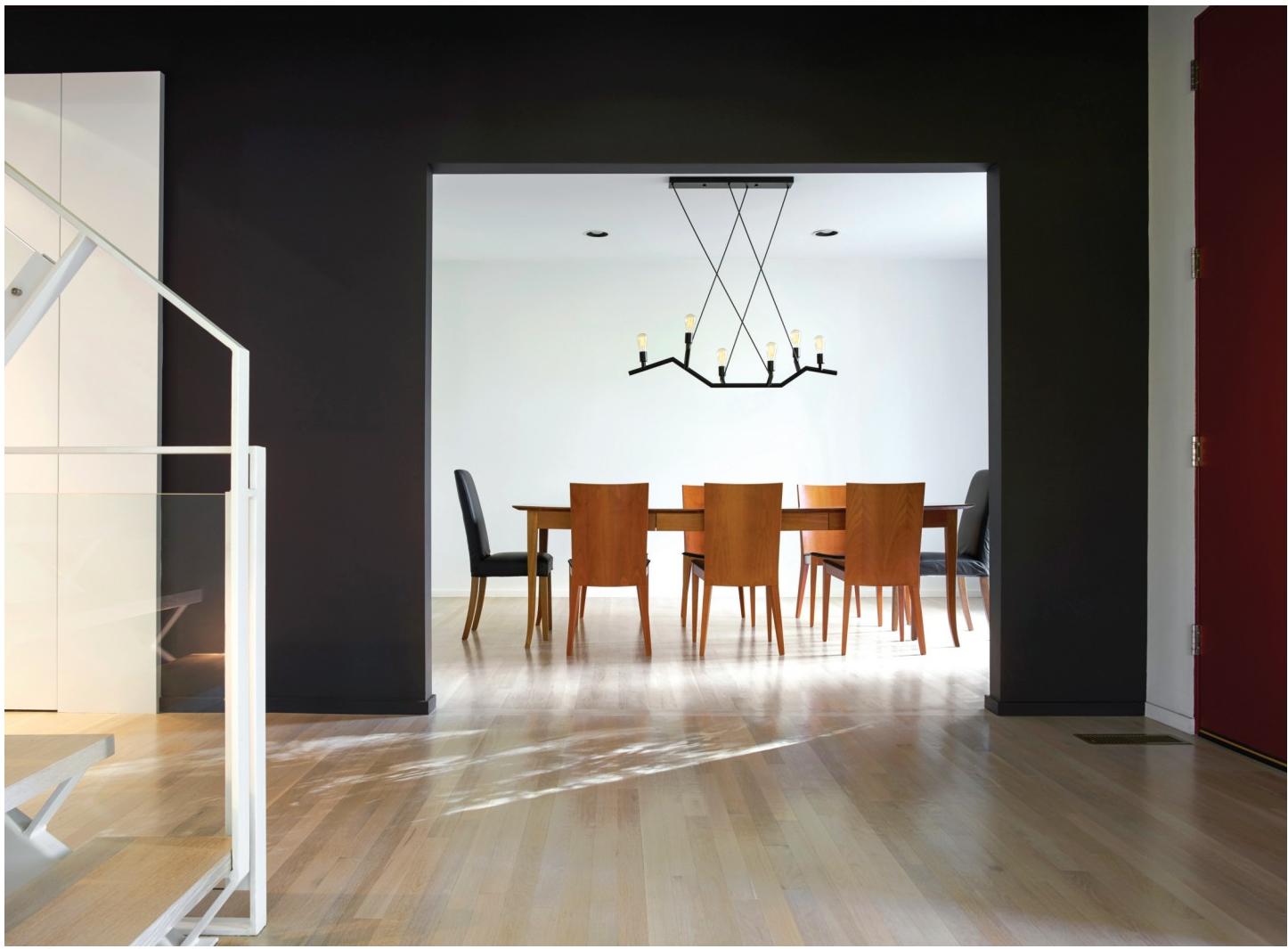
KUBE's design for the renovation affected about three quarters of the house's interior space, including much of the first floor and part of the second. The house's exterior received a facelift that included new fiber-cement board cladding, the replacement of shallow, paste-on bays and double-hung windows with modern plate-glass or casement windows, and the squaring off of the garage opening.

"The goal was to break open the box to allow views of the surrounding wooded landscape," Loosle-Ortega said.

"Interconnected spaces were created where previously there were walls dividing them. The rear roof [of the living room] was raised



Living area with balcony at upper left.



View from stairwell toward dining room.

to maximize views and light with large picture windows, creating a double-height space that unifies the house both literally and figuratively. The kitchen and den now open up to this space. The main entrance is on axis with the fireplace, which is now framed by large glass panels that provide views of the landscape beyond." The staircase in the entry hall even employs open risers so as to not interrupt this view.

"A collage of materials and textures ties together the new spaces into one cohesive composition," Loosle-Ortega continued. "A wood wall of custom-stained ash wraps around the kitchen and library, creating a cross-axis and seamlessly joining adjacent rooms." Doors hidden in the ash wall lead to the pantry, a laundry and mud room, and the powder room. "The family room's Macassar ebony storage wall and [fiber-cement board]-clad chimney serve as vertical focal points within the composition, while adding warmth and texture at the heart of the home. A continuous black ceiling frames the spaces, creating a horizontal datum [i.e., central organizing element] through the first floor."

Given that ceilings are often painted white or some other light color to help bounce around available light and keep a space from feeling too closed in, the black-painted ceiling is an unexpected element, particularly in a design aimed at opening up a house's interior.

"We wanted a contrast between high and low spaces, and we weren't worried about light given all the glass we introduced to the renovated space," Loosle-Ortega explained. "We thought the black would enrich the materials, particularly the ash paneling, and set apart the white kitchen cabinetry. An all-white ceiling was too obvious, and would have dumbed down the kitchen and entry areas." The dark ceiling, in contrast, "dresses them up and is unexpected. The clients were unsure—and nervous—but they trusted us, and now they love it."

Many houses built in recent decades employ double-height entries or living rooms that are supposed to generate an air of grandeur, but succeed only in evoking a sense of boxy, useless emptiness. KUBE's design for the new living room avoids this problem by articulating the space with changes in materials and the insertion of a new second-floor balcony. Although the balcony takes up some of the room's volume, it actually makes the space seem larger, because it allows occupants to experience the space more directly from the second floor, and because it creates on the first floor a sequence of compression and release as one moves further into the room.

"The previous balcony was much smaller and had no view of the exterior except through the narrow skylights," Loosle-Ortega said. "We purposely enlarged the balcony and added the library



Kitchen.

walk so that one could occupy the double-height space and not just look down into it. The balcony now is a reading area that enjoys the views out to the forest from multiple points, and the double-height space is more sculpted as opposed to just a square void."

Other changes to the second floor focused on the master suite. A key move was reversing the position of the suite's bedroom and adjoining sitting room. As built, the master bed's headboard shared a wall with the tub, toilet, and sink in one of the children's bedrooms, a situation that sends the imagination in unwanted directions. Reversing the positions of the master bedroom and sitting room not only addressed that issue, but gave the master bedroom a better corner location that is closer to the suite's walk-in closet and bathroom.

"The sitting room is also now a buffer between the master bedroom and the loft space," Loosle-Ortega said. "It can be opened to the loft space, enjoying views out, or closed off by glass sliding doors for privacy either from the bedroom area or the loft area." In addition, "the glass in front of the master closet allows for views from the bedroom [through the loft space] out to the exterior. So in a real sense, the owners can enjoy the views out from anywhere in the house, which was one of their requests."

The clients "were very good to work with—they traveled a lot for work, but were able to respond to us quickly when decisions

had to be made," Loosle-Ortega said. "They asked good questions about our design decisions, and allowed us to work creatively. They weren't afraid to try new things, such as the black ceiling, and they trusted us throughout the process. In their travels, they were always referencing modern design moves, details, or materials that they saw in hotels or restaurants that caught their eye. So they were excited about their home being similar."

As a result of the renovation, "a house built in 1985—but looking like it was 1885, which is typical of Potomac and developer homes—is now more appropriate to its site," Loosle-Ortega said. "The clients are very happy and proud of their home—we've been there numerous times for dinner, and they've hosted friends there. They enjoy showing it off, and she loves her kitchen and pantry space."

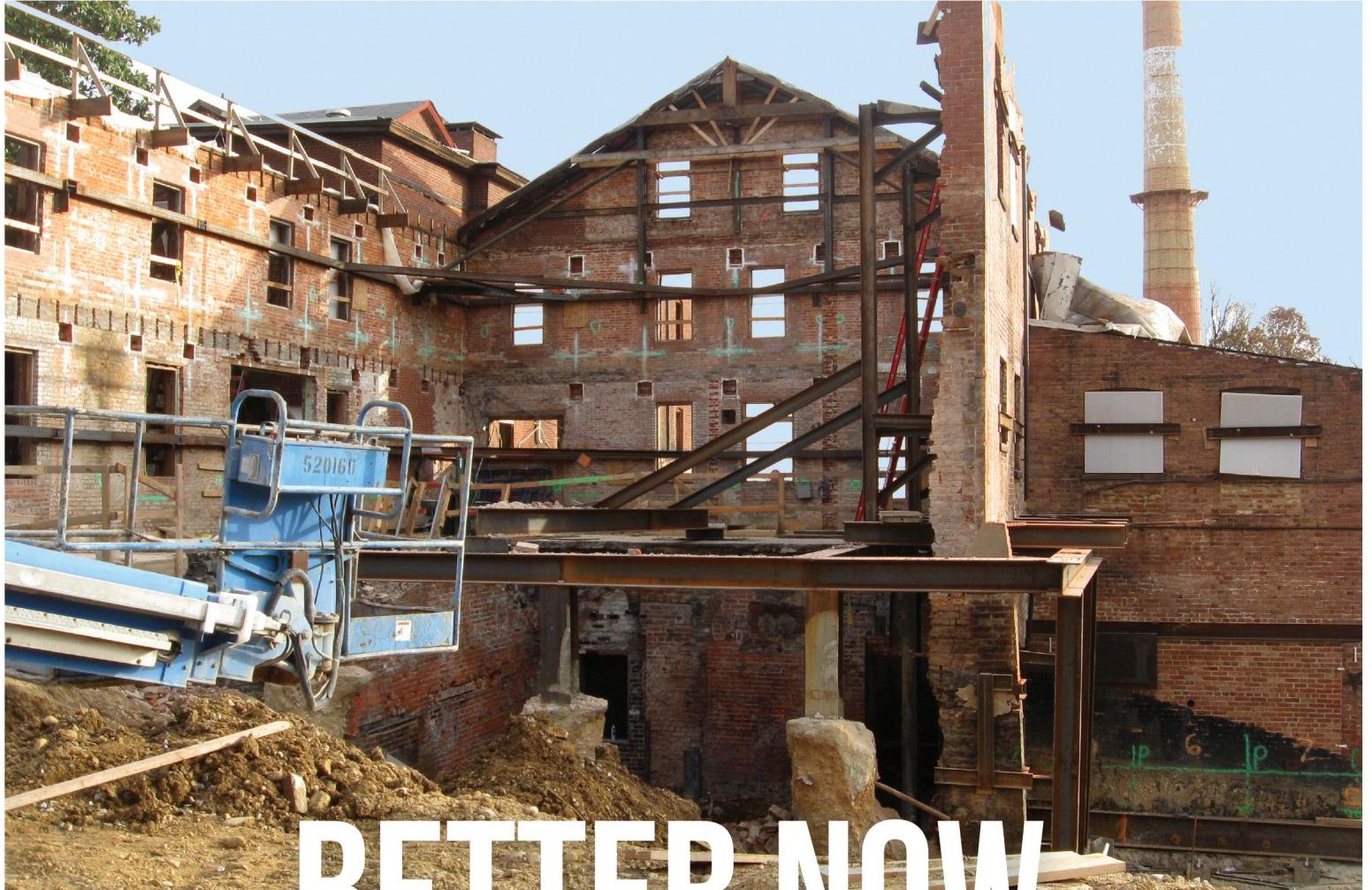
KUBE's work for the clients is continuing. "We're currently designing a new rear deck and landscape, and we're also going to have an orchard in front of the house," Loosle-Ortega said. "The owner wants to be able to harvest fruits and give back to the community. The history of Potomac is that it was cultivated land, and she feels it's important to make use of all the open space in the area, rather than just surrounding the house with huge patches of grass that soak up natural resources and give nothing back." ☀



Architecture KUBE ARCHITECTURE
Photography GREG POWERS PHOTOGRAPHY

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-Scott Rappe, AIA, LEED AP, Principal, Kuklinski+Rappe Architects



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Mid-Century Makeover

Waterfront House Regains Lost Stylishness

by Steven K. Dickens, AIA, LEED AP



Wiedemann Architects is a residential firm best known for traditionally-styled houses and apartments. The firm also has a growing portfolio of highly modern residences. But the firm had never done a house—either new or a renovation—in the Mid-Century Modern style popular from the 1950s to the '70s. “I’m passionate about all styles of architecture,” said principal **Greg Wiedemann, AIA**. He recognized Mid-Century Modern as a “missing link in the evolution towards our current residential architecture design,” and accordingly saw the commission for the renovation of this waterfront house on Maryland’s Eastern Shore as more than just another great project. He viewed it as a great opportunity for professional growth.

The client, for whom Wiedemann has done projects varying from a high-style Beaux-Arts apartment in New York to a compound of buildings in traditional vernacular styles at a rural Maryland estate, has a similarly expansive passion for all kinds of architecture. When, in 2016, he stumbled upon this derelict waterfront house for sale

near Easton, Maryland, he immediately wanted to buy, renovate, and restore it—notwithstanding that he had no particular purpose in mind for the house. Moreover, while interest in Mid-Century Modern has surged in recent years, the trend apparently hadn’t reached charming but conservative Talbot County: In the real estate listing, none of the photographs showed the house at all! The listing focused on views of the Tred Avon River and assumed that the house would be demolished.

Indeed, the 1958 house was in very poor condition, but the elements of its Mid-Century Modern design were unmistakable. The main house is almost a perfect rectangle in plan with a wide, low-slope gable roof. A rectangular carport with a flat roof extends to the north. Everything is tied together by a grid of round steel columns, parallel heavy timber beams, and a horizontal datum—a consistent architectural line—set at 6 feet 8 inches above the floor level. The south (river-facing) façade is almost all glass; the datum is reflected in a transom bar between sliding



Land-facing façade, with the carport at left.



Exterior of the house before renovation.

Photo by Greg Wiedemann

Project: Mid-Century Waterfront Renovation,
Talbot County, MD

Architects: **Wiedemann Architects**
Interior Designers: **Shaun Jackson Inc.**
Contractor: **Bluepoint Construction, LLC**

Photos © Anice Hoachlander/Hoachlander Davis Photography,
except as noted

glass doors and fixed windows above. The north (land-facing) façade also has transoms above the datum, but below is entirely brick, with a few slot openings and flush wood doors. Along both the north and south sides, the steel columns are situated slightly outside of the exterior wall, providing shadow lines and vertical accents that offset the otherwise horizontal compositions. At the north side, four of the roof beams extend beyond the house: The carport's roof is suspended from the beams, and the carport roof is set at the datum level. (The carport slab is lower than the floor inside the house, so there is sufficient headroom, although it is low.)

At the interior, the datum establishes the top plane of kitchen cabinetry, built-in storage units, doors, wood panels, and other elements. The columns are engaged in walls, peeking out above the datum line in many cases. The beams are visually prominent, emphasizing the generous ceiling height and room sizes, and their spacing sets the locations of major divisions between rooms.

"Some aspects of the [existing] house came off as experimental," noted project architect **Barbara Sweeney, AIA**, an associate at Wiedemann Architects, pointing to the quantity of built-in furniture, the peculiar indoor pool, and the highly-unusual low-voltage electrical system with strange toggles in lieu of conventional switches. The pool—rather too small for swimming, rather too large for a hot tub, and oddly positioned in the very middle of the house—was eliminated; a new outdoor pool was constructed. The client loved the built-ins, so most were faithfully replicated using the same American walnut wood. The client also loved the weird toggles, but it seems that that technology dead-ended at some point: The switches proved incompatible with current-day electrical systems and had to be replaced.



Living/dining area.

Although much of the work would be categorized as restoration, with changes mostly entailing simple updates, there were also changes that weren't strictly speaking necessary, but which enhance the architectural character. Notably, for exterior brick areas, which required tuckpointing, the architects specified that the horizontal joints be raked deeply while the mortar of vertical joints aligns with the face of the brick. The brick was then painted white. These moves emphasize the visual play of the horizontal brick wall against the vertical columns and slot openings more strikingly than the original red brick wall with standard flush mortar joints.

Inside, the kitchen was shifted and enlarged, positioned symmetrically within the structural grid and engaging two of the steel columns. The back wall of the kitchen, with counters and wall cabinets, is white, whereas the perpendicular walls are datum-height millwork in the same American walnut as the rest of the house. These moves tie the kitchen to the grid more rigorously than the original kitchen did, and reinforce the play of intersecting gridlines.

The architects fully embraced the datum line in the interior reworking, including in the replacement kitchen. This unexpectedly made refrigerator selection one of the most challenging tasks in the entire process, occupying a disproportionate amount of project architect Sweeney's time (every renovation project has one such task). After considerable searching, a modern, panel-ready refrigerator lower than 7 feet in height was found, which, with careful installation, comes right in at the datum's 6'-8" level.



Living area before renovation, showing the existing indoor pool.

Photo by Greg Wiedemann

The original house included a proper master suite at the west side of the house, separate from the rest of the bedrooms, with its own bathroom and closets. But, oddly enough, it had two single beds, built-in against the side wall. In 1958, this may have been a stylish move, but the concept of the master suite has evolved considerably since then. With the main living/dining space shifting into the area where the pool was, Wiedemann expanded the master by one module of the house's grid. Low walls (datum-height, of course) separate the expansive suite into different areas. The bed—now king-size, and no longer built in—faces out to the view. The bathroom is downright grand.



Entry hall with bookcases.



Kitchen.

One problematic aspect of Mid-Century Modern buildings is their energy inefficiency. The aesthetic was often ahead of the technology: Large areas of single-pane glazing, for example, not only bleed heat or coolness, but also are notorious for air and water infiltration problems. Very thin roof planes were also part of the aesthetic, leaving little room for insulation. Another common aesthetic preference was to expose both sides of a brick wall, interior and exterior, causing another heat drain. In renovating this house, Wiedemann "did what we could." Most notably, all of the windows and glass doors were replaced with modern, insulated glass replicas. Insulation was added as possible. The basic layout of the original forced-air system was maintained, but all the components were replaced with new, higher-efficiency elements.

With its waterfront setting and long, wide gable, the house bears a striking resemblance to the famous William Low House of 1887, a seaside "cottage" in Rhode Island by the venerable architect Charles McKim. In architectural history classes, practically all architecture students encounter the Low House as a premier example of the "Shingle Style" of the late 19th century, with earthy materials, a sense of gravity keeping the house low to the earth, little ornament, and simplified massing. Was this house on the



Master bath with bedroom at left.

Tred Avon originally an homage of some sort, a reinterpretation of the Low House into the Mid-Century vernacular? If so, the original architect was very successful. But the original client and architect of the Eastern Shore house, it seems, have been lost to time. One can only state with certainty that Wiedemann Architects and their client have reclaimed the high aspirations and thoughtful execution of the original 1958 house. 

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Found Opportunities

Architects Bring Character to a Lackluster Vacation House

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

Project: Terrapin Neck Renovation,
Shepherdstown, WV

Architects: **Richard Williams Architects, PLLC**
Structural Engineers: **A.F. McCormick Structural Engineers**
Contractor: **Michael F. Taylor Custom Structures**

Perched atop a bluff overlooking a serene, tree-lined stretch of the Potomac River near Shepherdstown, West Virginia, there stood a 1980s house that simply did not do justice to the spectacular site. With its jumble of shed (half-gable) roofs, generic gray-painted siding, and uninviting front porch, the house failed to create a clear architectural impression. While large windows facing north and west framed beautiful views of the river, the south and east façades were largely blank, ignoring the potential for complementary vistas of the surrounding woods.

The property's owners, a couple who co-founded a development firm based in Washington, believed that a judicious renovation could correct the house's shortcomings, which also included a haphazard floor plan and the need for an additional guest bedroom. They were disheartened when the first few architects they approached recommended demolishing the structure and starting over. They eventually found more sympathetic ears in the DC-based firm of **Richard Williams Architects**.



House before renovation.

Photo by Richard Williams Architects



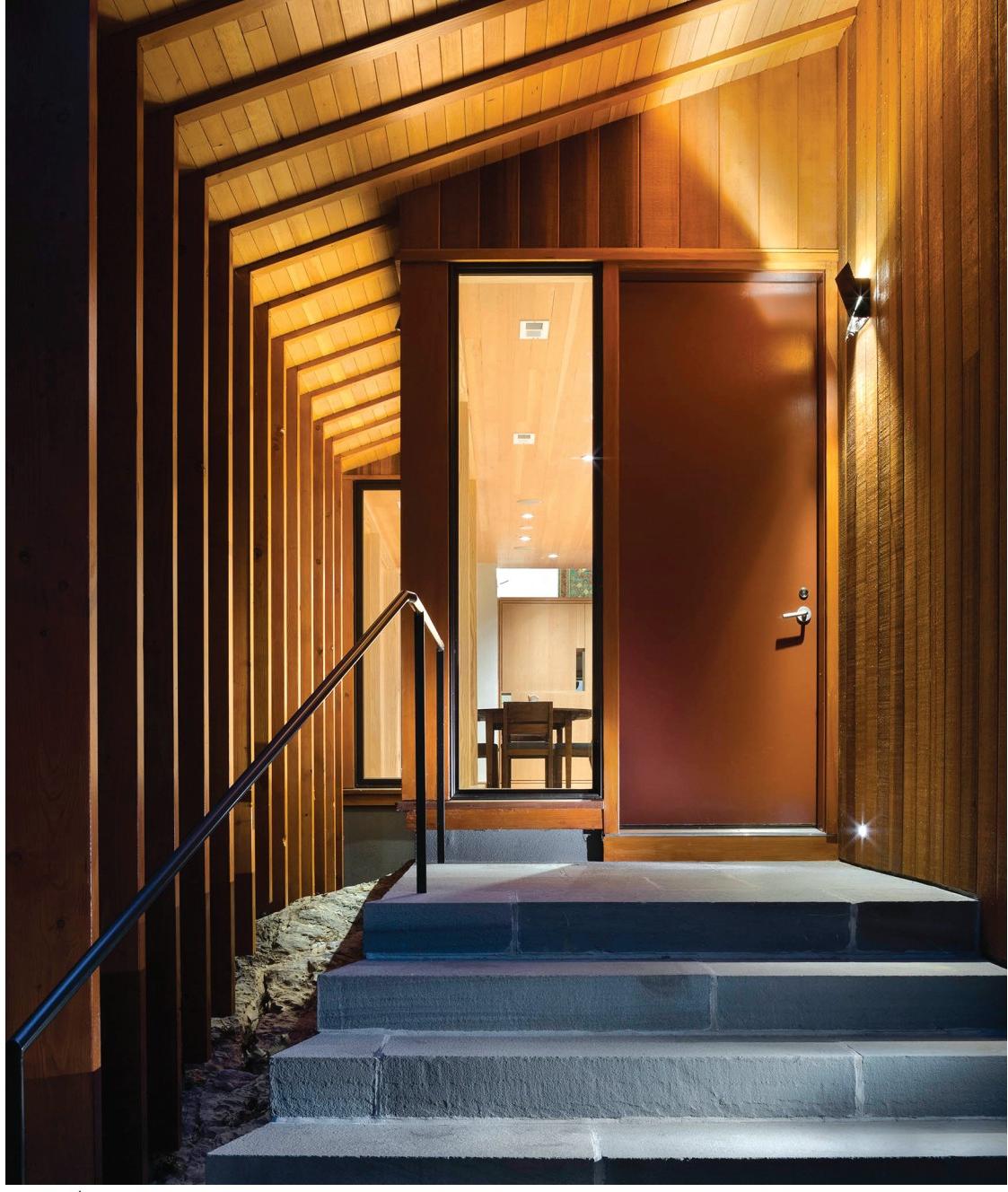
Detail of the screen wall/boulder connections.



View toward main entry.



View of the house from the woods.



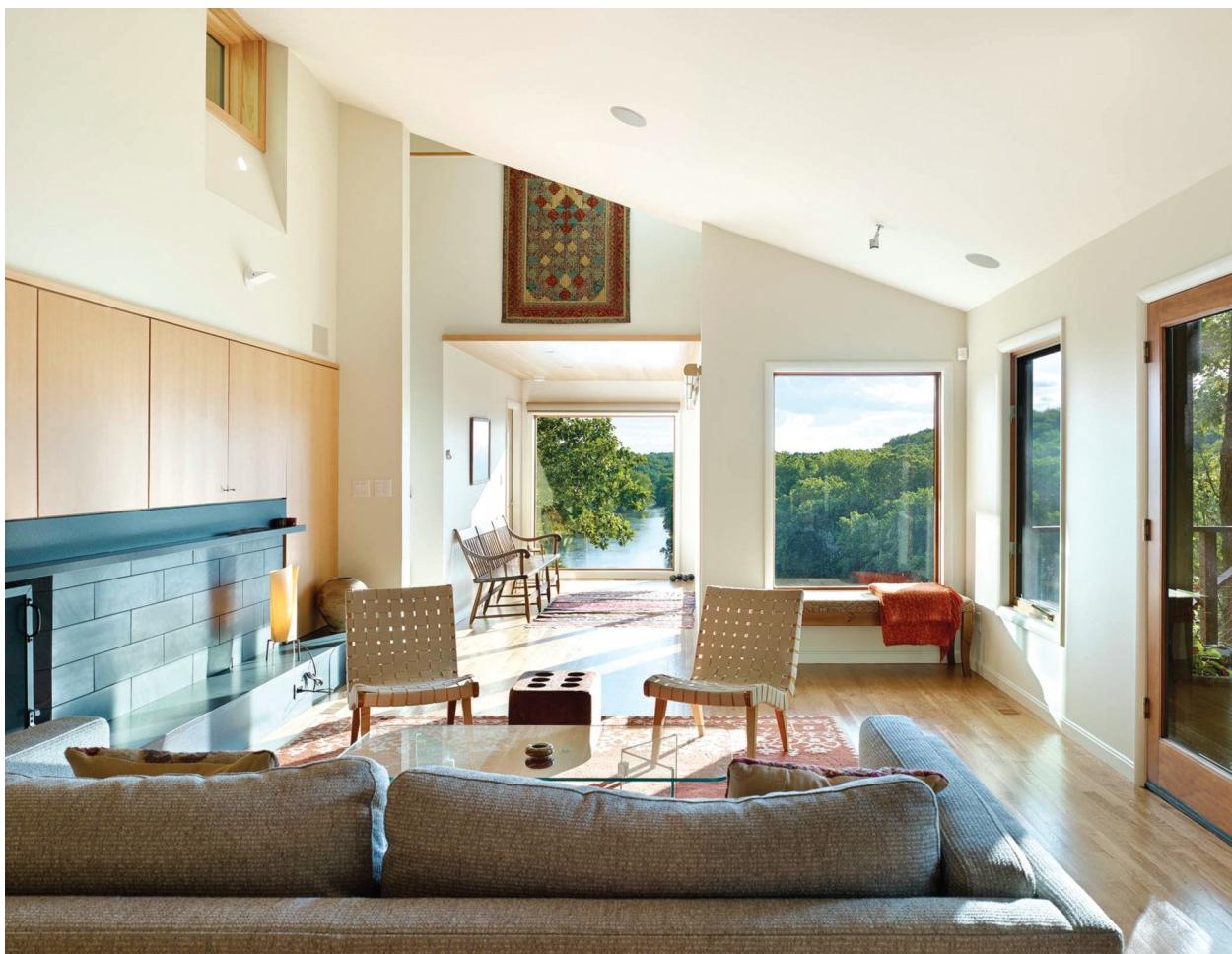
New porch.



Photos © Tom Arban, except as noted



Entry hall, looking toward front door.



Living room, with view toward Potomac River beyond.



Dining room.

Respecting the owners' wishes to work with the existing structure as much as possible, the design team, which included project architect **Justin Donovan, AIA**, and **Nolan Ediger, AIA, LEED Green Associate**, prioritized the most problematic aspects of the house. Chief among these from an aesthetic standpoint were the chaotic roofscape, lack of views to the woods, and what Donovan described as a "depressing" arrival experience. The architects realized that the southeast corner of the house, surrounding the main entry, was the spot where all of these problems collided. A relatively modest alteration there could go a long way toward improving the house's appearance and livability.

On paper, their design solution for this section of the house was simple: A narrow addition running along the south façade that would regularize the jagged floor plan, introduce a more consistent roofline, provide space for a generously scaled foyer and new dining area, and incorporate expansive windows overlooking the woods. Lining the exterior of the addition would be a long screen wall composed of wooden posts mimicking the rhythm of the surrounding trees, creating a more welcoming porch, and bringing architectural consistency to the messy composition.

"As we started testing out the footprint of this addition, we were confronted with an obstacle—a boulder right by



Living area before renovation.

Photo by Richard Williams Architects

the porch," recalled Donovan. "We decided to embrace it rather than fight it. The owners really loved the idea, and the builder was game, too." Accordingly, the architects adapted the design of the simple wooden posts next to the entryway, setting them on stainless steel rods embedded in the rock. The bottoms of the wooden posts are at different heights corresponding to the curvature of the boulder. The resulting undulation in the screen wall introduces a visual fluidity that complements the predominantly straight lines of the structure while creating



View from kitchen toward the river.



a tangible connection between the landscape and the building. Inside, the new foyer and dining area are lined with windows affording views to the woods and admitting ample daylight, filtered by the trees and the wooden screen.

Meanwhile, at the western end of the house, the architects set out to revamp a bulky two-story wing that included the master bedroom. Substantially offset in plan from the main living areas and topped by a full gable roof—the only one in the entire structure—set perpendicular to all of the shed roofs, this wing bore no architectural relationship to the rest of the house. The architects determined that by replacing the gable roof with a pair of shed roofs parallel to the others, they could simultaneously tame the scale of this wing while creating space for a new guest bedroom on the upper level.

Minor extensions to the southern end of the master bedroom wing and to the eastern end of the house helped rationalize the plan and give occupants a little more breathing room. All told, the additions increased the footprint of the 2,200-square-foot house by about 800 square feet. Sensitive landscaping and a consistent exterior skin of warm-toned wood now help to tie the entire house together. A separate new building with grey board-and-batten siding and a bright yellow sliding door, suggestive of vernacular barns of the region, includes an additional guest suite, a garage, and a potting shed.



Living room.

Renovations to the interior of the main house were relatively modest in scope, yet transformative. Fussy, stained-wood window frames, which competed with views of nature for attention, were replaced by simpler versions with frames painted off-white to match the neutral walls. Existing red oak flooring was largely retained, but complemented by new Douglas fir millwork, wainscoting, and even ceiling planes in key spots. Bamboo cabinets, requested by the owners, lend a bit of visual texture to

the kitchen. A slate fireplace surround recalls the slate steps that now lead to the main entrance.

"This was *not* a gut renovation," emphasized Donovan. "The owners were very practical, and not really interested in change for its own sake." Through a relatively limited number of carefully considered design strategies, the architects have turned a house that was riddled with missed opportunities into a cozy retreat that celebrates its natural context. ☀

Jessica Marcotte Photography

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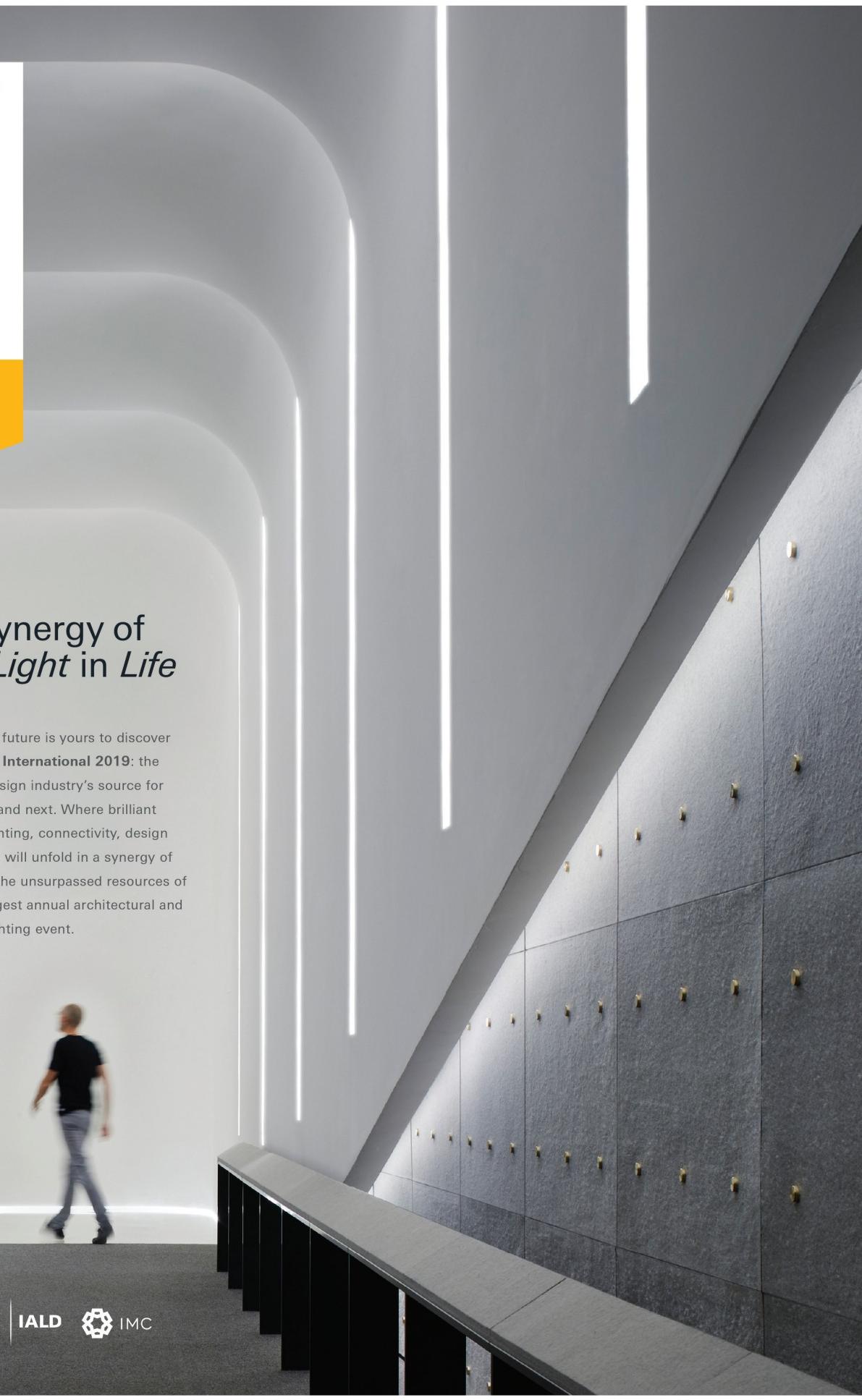
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Project: Artist's Retreat,

Washington, DC

Architects: **Teass \ Warren Architects**

Landscape Architects: **Moody Graham**

Structural Engineers: **United Structural Engineers, Inc.**

Contractors: **Paul Mickum/Micumba** (building); **Oldetowne Landscape Architects** (landscape)

Dusk view of the artist's retreat.

Photos © Allen Russ Photography

Artist's (Re)Treat

Humble Outbuilding Becomes the Gem of the Lot

by Deane Madsen, Assoc. AIA



Views of the artist's retreat.

At the very edge of the District, where a spur of the Pinehurst Trail meets one of the city's original boundary stones, the regular grid of the L'Enfant Plan crashes against the border, resulting in an awkward, non-rectilinear lot. The main house upon that Barnaby Woods lot is aligned with the east-west orientation of the facing street, while the long edge of the property line runs northwest to southeast. The resulting residual space, which also slopes downward in that direction, provides an opportunity for landscape and architecture to work in tandem to transform the backyard into a garden sanctuary, anchored by a new artist's retreat.

The clients, who were looking to make the property as cohesive as possible while balancing built elements of a neo-colonial house with a modern addition and a forgettable garage outbuilding, first turned to landscape architects Moody Graham to unify the multi-level backyard connecting them. "We looked at [the yard] and immediately said that there's an opportunity to simplify this, to tie in a lawn space with this garage, which we saw potential for as more of a destination," recalled Ryan Moody, ASLA. "We proposed some initial concepts to them, and they got excited about the idea. It was obviously a little bit broader of a project than they originally

anticipated, but they saw value in redoing the small structure they had and making it visually more interesting."

That's when they and the clients engaged Teass\Warren Architects with the goal of transforming the little-used garage into a studio that would also become the garden's focal point when seen from the glassy, modern addition. Through conversations with the clients and the landscape team, Teass\Warren began to explore the notion of a sanctuary space that could play host equally to a painter and a yogi, which formed the basis for the artist's retreat.

The landscape interventions to which the architects were reacting include a sloping site demarcated by a series of small terraces. Walls of reclaimed, dry-laid granite block hold these terraces back, though these walls almost disappear in summer and fall when flowers and foliage are at their peaks. Moody emphasized the layering effect, both in terms of elevation change and in density of planting.

With a rich palette of flora—in addition to the canopy of Pinehurst Park, visible from the property—Teass\Warren sought to capture as much of that view as possible. The retreat sits at the southernmost corner of the property, which allowed the architects to open up the northern sides of the studio to admit dappled daylight. Above the French doors of the entryway, a dormer interrupts the roofline to welcome additional light from the northeast, while the gabled northwest edge frames two triangular windows that prolong sunset's golden hour.

Within the studio, which is a little more than 400 square feet, exposed fir planks and beams line the underside of the roof, providing a feeling of warmth ignited by sunlight entering through the double-height glazing. Uplights on the wooden ceiling are reflected back into the open work area, although they can be adjusted to highlight artworks hung on the studio's back wall for more formal gallery arrangements. The dormer, in addition to adding sculptural interest to the exterior and admitting more light to the interior, amplifies the perceived volume of the space within its tight footprint. As an added benefit, Teass\Warren designed the studio with the potential for retrofit as an accessory dwelling unit or "granny flat" in mind. In its current state as an oil painting studio, however, ventilation was a priority, as well, so the architects included operable windows to take in aromas from the garden, favoring lavender over linseed. "For us, the piece that stuck with us was that it was this lantern we could create in the landscape," said **Charles Warren, AIA, LEED AP**. "It was really the idea that it's this glowing structure you could see from the house that also provides high quality of light for the studio space."

The studio's exterior material palette of brick, copper, and slate borrows from the vocabulary of the main house on the property, making the retreat something of a little



The building before renovation.

Courtesy of Teass \ Warren Architects

sibling to its uphill counterpart. At the base of the series of terraces, granite pavers form a level landing that leads to the studio entrance, and a bench incorporated into the property line wall at the retreat's northwest edge combines with its wall of windows to suggest an outdoor room. Above the bench, vertical granite bands echo the rhythm of the studio's window spacing.

What the team has created is a jewel within the garden. Where an underutilized garage once accompanied an undifferentiated hillside lawn, there now stands a proud companion building, the path to which emphasizes the connection between old and new. Warren avoids over-aggrandizing the feel of the retreat, but still refers to it as a special place where the owners can escape the quotidian grind and the feel of the city. "We came on board to give that structure some presence and design it to reflect back onto the landscape," he said. "It was an interesting process, because that's not normally how we'd go about it."

For Moody's part, leading the project from the landscape side isn't all that uncommon, as both he and partner Jay Graham, FASLA, have backgrounds in architecture. "If there's a moment where we think a project is more likely to succeed, or where an architectural intervention could lead to a better project, we like the dynamic of having another perspective," Moody said. Through their collaboration, Teass\Warren and Moody Graham may have created the best room in the house—even if you have to walk a bit down the garden path to get there. ♣



Interior of the artist's retreat.

**moody
graham**

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New home office in the Jones Condominium.

Photo © Anna Meyer



Living room, with
new corridor at right.

Small Spaces Made Right

Two Young Architects Smartly Remake Their One-Bedroom Condos

by Ronald O'Rourke

One-bedroom apartments might seem to offer little opportunity to reshape spaces for better livability, but two young Washington architects, each of them first-time home buyers, recently showed otherwise. With a few well-chosen design moves, they dramatically improved the functionality of their newly purchased one-bedroom condominium units. The projects may inspire local owners of similar apartments to explore what an architect could do for their residences.

After years of renting, architect **Jobi Jones, RA**, the principal of **Jobi Jones LLC**, a residential architecture and interior design firm, purchased a one-bedroom condominium apartment at the Montello, an eight-story, 37-unit condominium building in Washington's Kalorama Triangle area. Completed in 1922, the building is one of several early-20th-century apartment buildings that line parts of Columbia Road as it runs from Connecticut Avenue northeast into the Adams Morgan neighborhood.

As purchased, the second-floor unit was reasonably cozy, with a series of windows along one side that admit ample morning light while providing views of Columbia Road. As shown in the pre-renovation floor plan, however, the unit's layout created a problematic relationship between its public and private spaces,

Project: Jones Condominium,
Washington, DC

Architect/Interior Designer: **Jobi Jones LLC**
Contractors: **Sestak Remodeling**

requiring visitors to pass through the bedroom to access the bathroom. The arrangement at first seems to use space efficiently by eliminating hallways, but in fact turned part of the bedroom into a *de facto* hall.

Jones's main intervention, as shown in the post-renovation floor plan, was to shorten the bedroom by inserting a new wall fitted out with a pair of sliding doors. This one new wall accomplishes a lot: Most notably, it allows visitors (including overnight guests sleeping on the sofa) to access the bathroom without entering the bedroom. It also creates a distinct space for a home office. The entry into the bedroom, which was previously directly off of the living/dining room, is now around the corner, enhancing the bedroom's



Photo © Anna Meyer



Jones Condominium before renovation, showing the doorway from the bedroom to the living room.

sense of privacy. The home office extends the living/dining room visually, making it feel larger. And daylight from the windows in the home office area now does triple duty, illuminating the office area, brightening the bedroom (via glass panels in the sliding doors), and adding to the natural light reaching the living/dining room. It's not often that adding a wall can make a space feel bigger rather than smaller, or that a single new wall can do so many things to improve a residence.

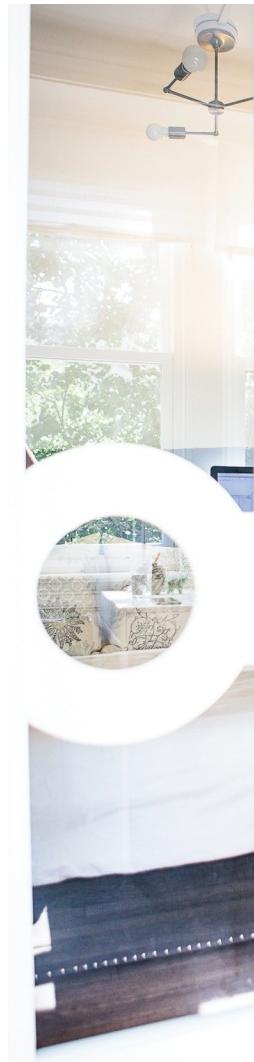
Jones's other key modification was to open the kitchen to the living/dining room by shortening a wall that had separated the two spaces. This second change further enhances the apartment's sense of spaciousness by creating an open area extending from the kitchen to the far end of the home office. Jones also converted a hard-to-reach corner of the kitchen into a needed coat closet facing the apartment's entry door, and added a kitchen island that provides additional storage and counter space. With this small group of modifications, Jones made her apartment brighter, more spacious, and better suited to the owner's needs.



FLOOR PLAN - EXISTING
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



FLOOR PLAN - PROPOSED
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

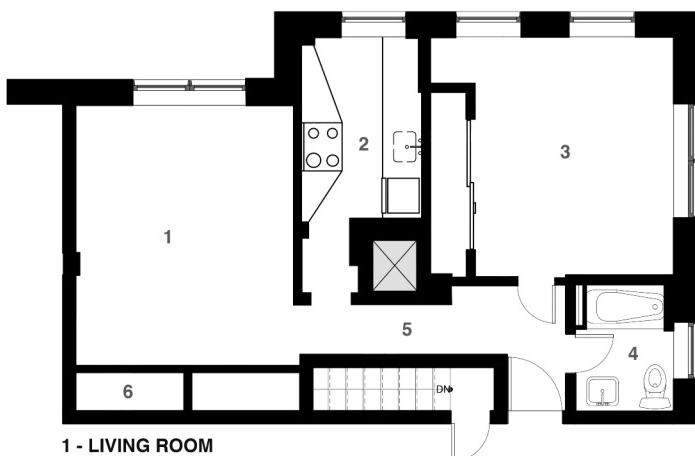


New doorway to bedroom.

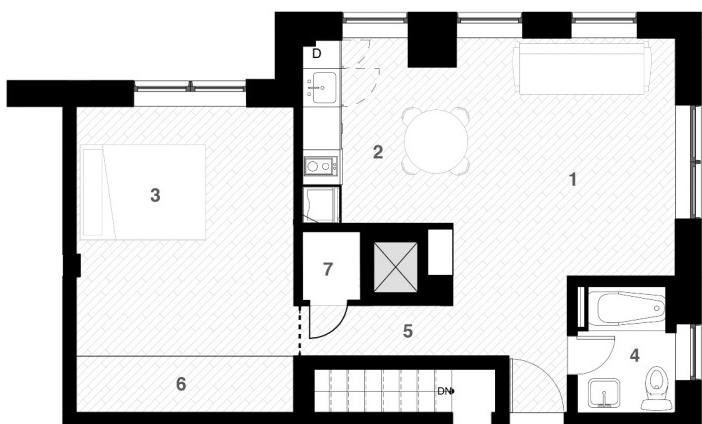


Photo © Anna Meyer

Before (left) and after (right) floor plans of the Hotaling Condominium.



1 - LIVING ROOM
2 - KITCHEN
3 - BEDROOM
4 - BATHROOM
5 - CORRIDOR
6 - CLOSET



1 - LIVING ROOM
2 - KITCHEN & DINING
3 - BEDROOM
4 - BATHROOM
5 - CORRIDOR
6 - WARDROBE
7 - CLOSET

Project: Hotaling Condominium,

Washington, DC

Architect: **Aaron M. Hotaling Architect**
Kitchen Cabinet Fabricator: **Reform**
Contractors: **Review Development**

About three blocks from the Montello, on 20th Street between Kalorama Triangle and Rock Creek Park, is the Allen Park, a four-story, 43-unit condominium building. Completed four years after the Montello, it is one of several apartment buildings that sit among the neighborhood's many row houses. It was here that another architect—**Aaron Hotaling, AIA**, an associate at the architecture firm MV+A—made his own transition from renter to owner by purchasing a street-level one-bedroom condominium.

As shown in the pre-renovation floor plan, the unit was oddly arranged, with its living/dining room tucked into the apartment's rear. The scheme kept the bedroom close to the bathroom, but required visitors to walk down a narrow and dimly lit hallway to access a rather sad-looking living/dining room that, with one modestly-sized window, resembled a basement TV room more than a proper space for eating and entertaining. A second problem with the arrangement was the cramped double-sided kitchen, whose clear space narrowed at one point to only two and a half feet. Taken as a whole, the apartment's design brought to mind claustrophobic submarine movies like *Das Boot*.

To repair this situation, Hotaling first swapped the locations of the living/dining room and bedroom, putting these two spaces where they arguably should have been in the first place. The living/dining room is now less confining and gathers available light from multiple windows on two sides of the building. He then opened the kitchen space up to the relocated living/dining room, creating a more spacious, better-lit, and functional arrangement for cooking, eating, and entertaining.



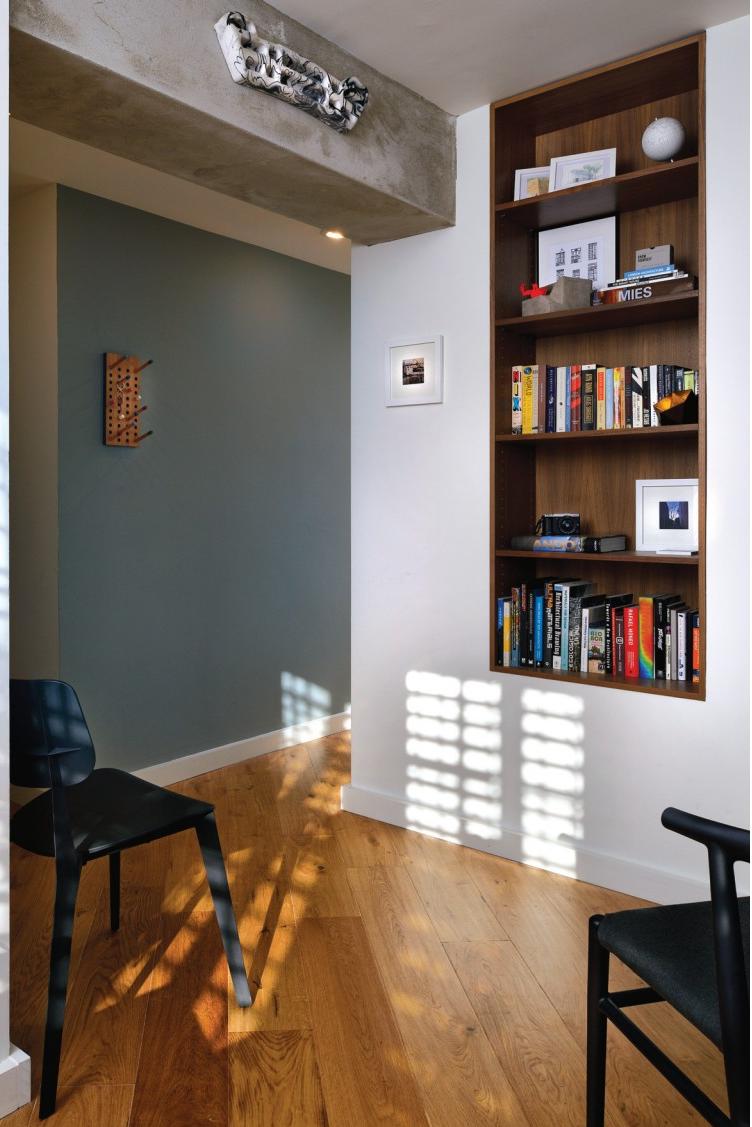
Kitchen before renovation.

Hotaling designed a sleek new kitchen with simple lines and neutral color tones that help make the new front space feel as large as possible. He then tied together the new arrangement for the entire apartment with new 7½-inch-wide white oak flooring installed on the diagonal. The result is a smart-looking, properly integrated residence, in contrast to the previously dark and arbitrary collection of spaces.

Both Hotaling and Jones had to manage some challenges in implementing their improvements, particularly when opening up their kitchen spaces. Hotaling encountered building mechanical systems above the kitchen that protruded below the ceiling line of the living/dining room. He responded with a solution that turned proverbial lemons into lemonade, creating a dropped ceiling that frames and demarcates the kitchen while preserving the overall unity of the apartment's main space.

Jones's challenge involved the concrete floor in her kitchen, which was one-half to three-quarters of an inch higher than the floor of the living/dining room. The solution was to painstakingly chip away the concrete surface to bring it down to the same level as the living/dining room—a noisy operation that could be heard not only by others in the building, but across the street. Jones managed that situation with the help of gift-card apology notes she distributed to affected neighbors. When the chipping work was complete, Jones installed new wood flooring in the kitchen that was stained to match the flooring in the living/dining room.

These two apartments differed in the design challenges they posed, but they both illustrate that small residences can have notable design problems, and that architects can respond to them with creative solutions. ■



View toward entry of Hotaling condominium.

Photo © Boris Feldblyum



Kitchen.

Photo © Boris Feldblyum



Living/dining area.

Photo © Anna Meyer



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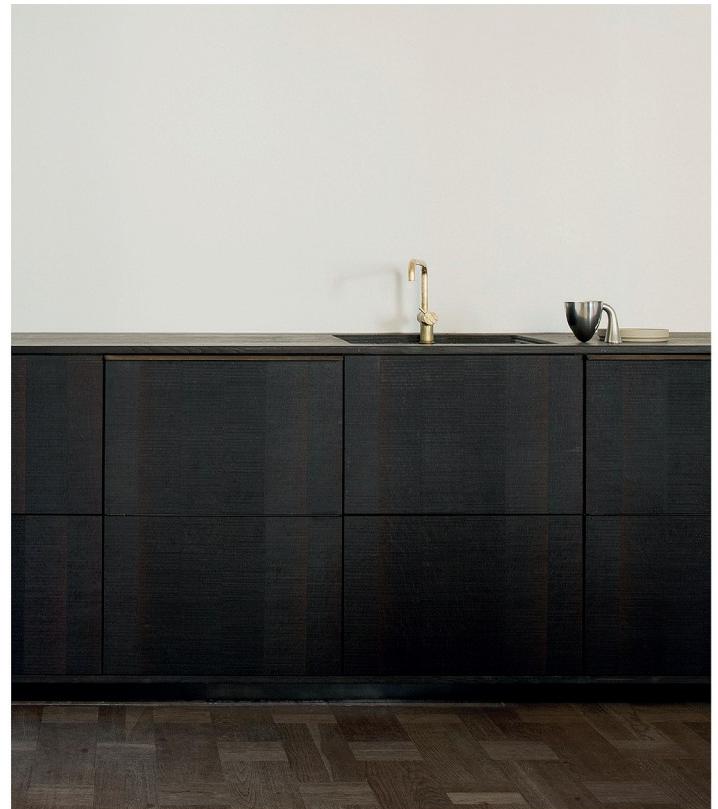
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Renovated lobby of Sedgwick Gardens.



Uncommon Spaces

Apartment Buildings Revamped for Enhanced Livability

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

Washington, DC, boasts dozens of beautifully designed apartment houses built during the 1920s and '30s. The lobbies and other shared spaces in such buildings tend to be heavily used, and inevitably require occasional mechanical upgrades and aesthetic freshening. **Bonstra | Haresign Architects** recently completed a series of restorations and renovations to three apartment buildings owned by a single local management company.

Photos of finished projects
© Anice Hoachlander/Hoachlander Davis
Photography; photos of existing conditions
courtesy of Bonstra | Haresign Architects

Project: Sedgwick Gardens Renovation,
Washington, DC

Architects/Interior Designers: **Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS**

Landscape Architects: **Allison Brown Design**

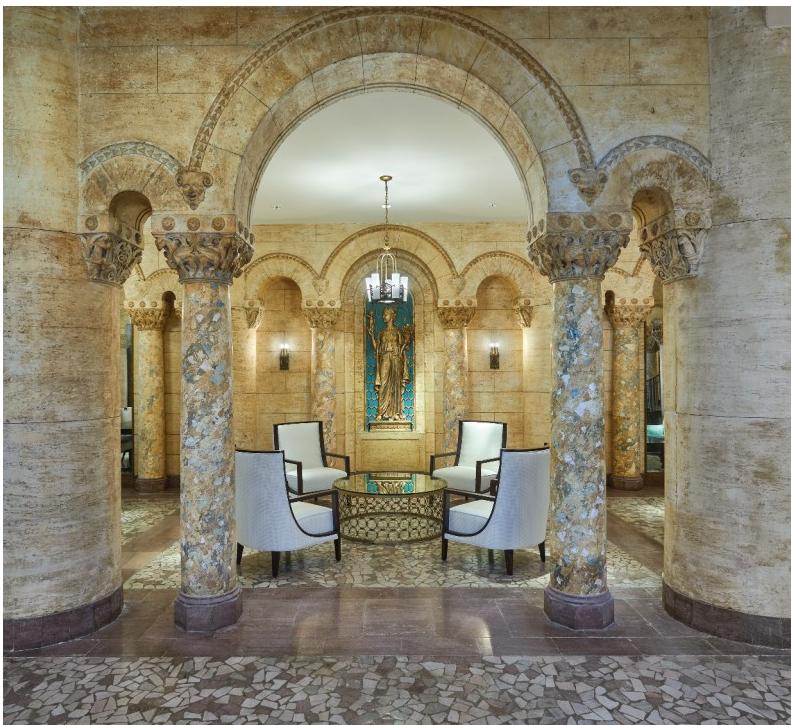
Structural Engineers: **FMC & Associates**

MEP Engineers: **Metropolitan Engineering Solutions / Shapiro-O'Brien**

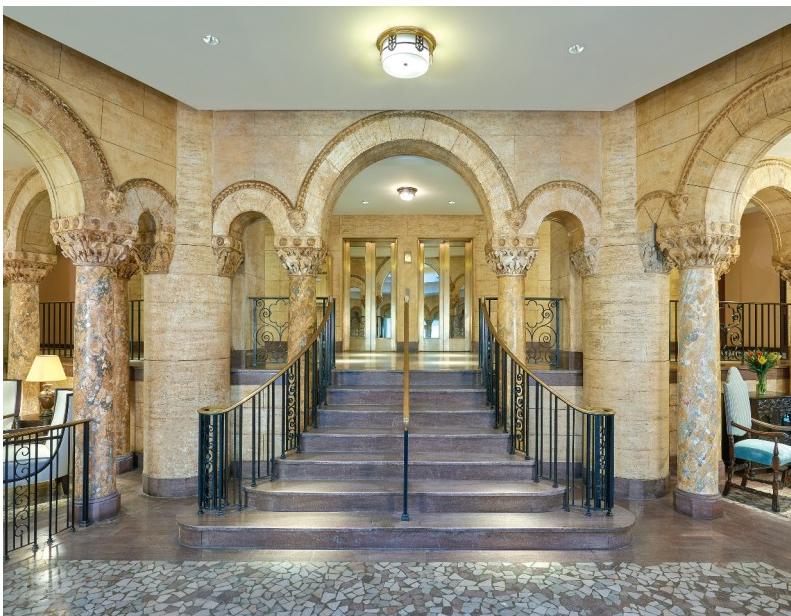
Historic Preservation Consultants: **EHT Traceries**

Historic Conservators: **Conservation Solutions**

Contractors: **Ultra Company**



Seating area off the lobby of Sedgwick Gardens.



Main staircase.

Sedgwick Gardens

One of the most distinguished—and eccentric—apartment buildings in DC is Sedgwick Gardens, at 3726 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Built in 1931, it was the work of Mihran Mesrobian, an Armenian-American architect who designed a number of prominent buildings in the city. Sedgwick Gardens is an exotic concoction of Moorish, Byzantine, and Art Deco motifs, which are especially evident in the octagonal lobby. Although the space was generally in good condition, some of the columns had been damaged by ruptured steam pipes, much of the furniture was out of date, and certain functional improvements were needed.

Sedgwick Gardens is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and both its exterior and interiors are DC



Lobby before renovation.



Seating area before renovation.

Historic Landmarks. Consequently, Bonstra | Haresign's work in this case consisted mostly of restoration. The architects refurbished the columns and the central fountain, which appear to be marble but are actually finished primarily in *scagliola*, a mix of cement and marble chips. The large skylight, metalwork, and historic light fixtures were also restored. As is often the case in sensitive restorations, much of the architects' hard work is not directly evident—steam pipes, for instance, were rerouted through the ceiling in order to prevent further damage in the event of future leaks.

The project also included some modest enhancements, which were carefully executed so as to minimize the impact on the original structure and finishes. These include the relocation of residents' mailboxes, the replacement of anodized aluminum entry doors with brass versions more like the original ones, and the addition of a concierge desk incorporating a grille based on existing metalwork in the space. The architects also inserted a private leasing office with glass partitions kept separate from the historic structure. New furniture was selected to complement reupholstered original pieces while subtly adding a more modern touch. The ceiling of the lobby was redesigned to rationalize the somewhat chaotic beam structure while providing space for new utilities and a small number of additional light fixtures.

On the exterior, the architects oversaw minor improvements to the entryway, replacement of lower level windows, and re-landscaping of the courtyards.



Project: The Parkway Renovation,

Washington, DC

Architects/Interior Designers: **Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS**

Landscape Architects: **Allison Brown Design**

Structural Engineers: **FMC & Associates**

MEP Engineers: **Metropolitan Engineering Solutions / Shapiro-O'Brien**

Historic Preservation Consultants: **EHT Traceries**

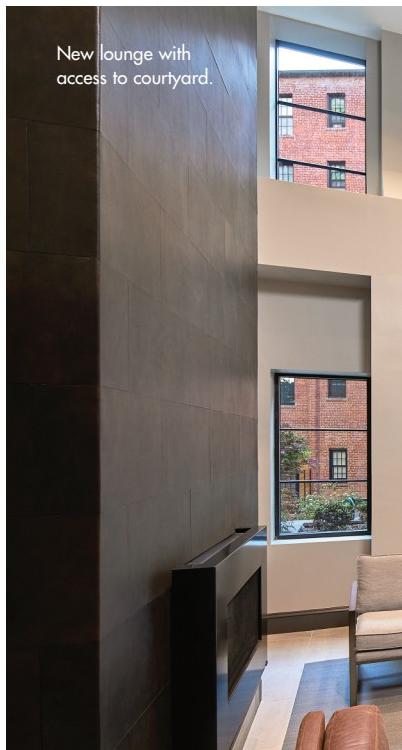
Contractors: **Moseley Construction Group**

Renovated lobby of the Parkway.



Courtyard of the Parkway, with new entrance visible in the background.

New lounge with access to courtyard.





Lobby before renovation.

The Parkway

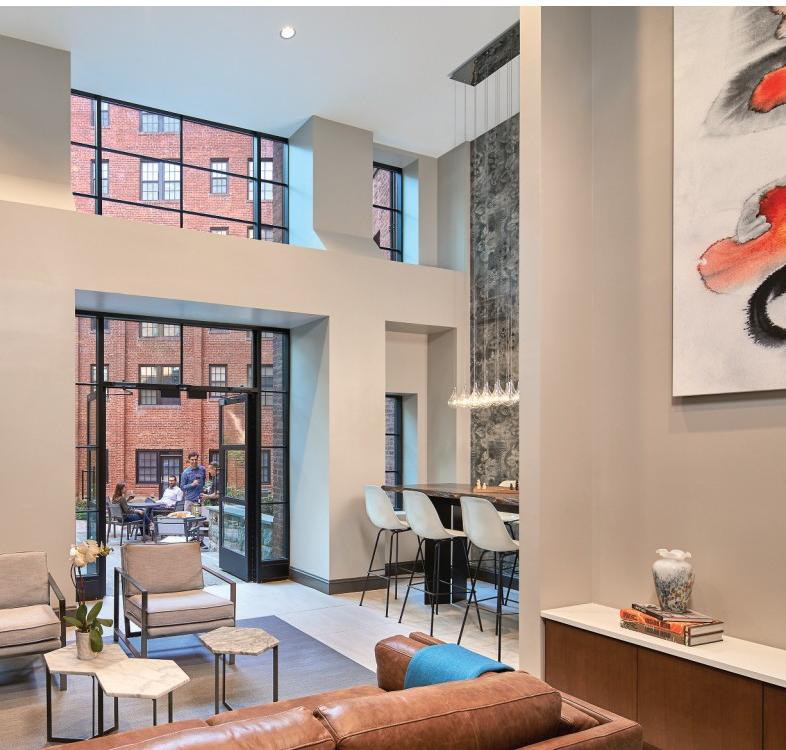
The Parkway, at 3220 Connecticut Avenue, NW, was designed by architect/developer Frank Russell White and completed in 1927. The first residential co-op in DC, it failed to attract an adequate number of buyers and went bankrupt by mid-1928. The building was subsequently converted to rental apartments.

While not a historic landmark itself, the Parkway is a contributing structure to the Cleveland Park Historic District, and thus any modifications to the exterior were subject to review by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board. Moreover, the property abuts Rock Creek Park, meaning that both the federal Commission of Fine Arts and the National Park Service would have a say over external changes. The interior, however, was not subject to design review by either DC or federal authorities.

In contrast to the elaborate Sedgwick Gardens just up the avenue, the Parkway is rather understated. Its main entrance consists of an ambiguous pair of doors shielded by a canopy suspended from chains anchored to the brick wall above. The architects initially proposed modifying the front façade to create a clearer entry sequence, but the DC preservation office would not allow it. Instead, the designers simply restored the canopy and turned their attention to the interior.

The Parkway's existing lobby was a gloomy, barren box with faded finishes. Here the architects felt that a significant renovation was in order. They replaced the dingy terrazzo floor, added a new staircase to the lower level, introduced gleaming brass railings and warm-toned wood cabinetry, and replaced the traditional chandeliers with sleek, highly geometric fixtures. A pair of swoopy Hans Wegner chairs and simple upholstered benches lend some Mid-Century Modern flair, providing an aesthetic bridge between the original architecture and the present day.

While preservation authorities balked at significant changes to the front façade, they approved a major revamp of the U-shaped building's courtyard, which looks out over the park. To enhance access to the outdoor space, Bonstra | Haresign created a new double-height lounge area, which was made possible by eliminating one apartment unit above. Expansive windows admit natural light and afford views to the courtyard, which now comes off like a private, manicured corner of Rock Creek Park.



The Archer

Built beginning in 1925 and previously known as Cathedral Court, the Archer was designed by Joseph Younger, who was also the architect of the landmark Kennedy-Warren Apartments in Cleveland Park. It stands at the intersection of Massachusetts and Wisconsin avenues, NW, near the National Cathedral. Unlike Sedgwick Gardens and the Parkway, the Archer is neither an individual landmark nor a part of a historic district. Nonetheless, it is a dignified work of architecture and Bonstra | Haresign took a respectful approach to its renovation.

The Archer is a mélange of relatively sedate Art Deco and Tudor revival styles, with a grand neoclassical archway defining its main entrance. Bonstra | Haresign began there by restoring the stonework of the entryway, replacing a fabric awning over the door with an elegant metal canopy, and adding modern lighting. Inside the lobby, the architects restored key historic details, such as the decorative bands at the tops of the columns, while introducing more modern furniture, carpeting, and lighting.



Renovated entrance to the Archer.



Entrance to the Archer, then known as the Cathedral Court, before renovation.

Renovated lobby of the Archer.



Project: The Archer Renovation,
Washington, DC

Architects/Interior Designers: **Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS**

Landscape Architects: **Allison Brown Design**

Structural Engineers: **FMC & Associates**

MEP Engineers: **Metropolitan Engineering Solutions / Shapiro-O'Brien**

Civil Engineers: **AMT Engineering**

Contractors: **Hammerhead Construction** (public spaces); **Ross Renovation & Construction** (units)



Lobby before renovation.



New library at the Archer.

Another critical interior improvement involved a hallway that previously exited onto an alley. The architects eliminated that exit and removed one adjacent apartment unit to create a shared library space, marked by an exuberant, semi-custom light fixture that **John Edwards, Assoc. AIA**, of Bonstra | Haresign compared to a “giant Hedy Lamarr hat.” The library in turn opens onto a large side yard with a terrace and gazebo for residents’ use.

As with the other two projects, the renovation of the Archer took place while the building was fully occupied,

entailing substantial project management challenges. Further complicating the work was the fact that “it was hard to even determine how the original mechanical systems were designed,” according to **David T. Haresign, FAIA**. “There was nobody around who knew these systems.” Despite the hurdles, all three projects apparently went smoothly, and the architects report that the residents are thrilled with the results. ☀



Renovated corridor at the Archer.



Corridor before renovation.

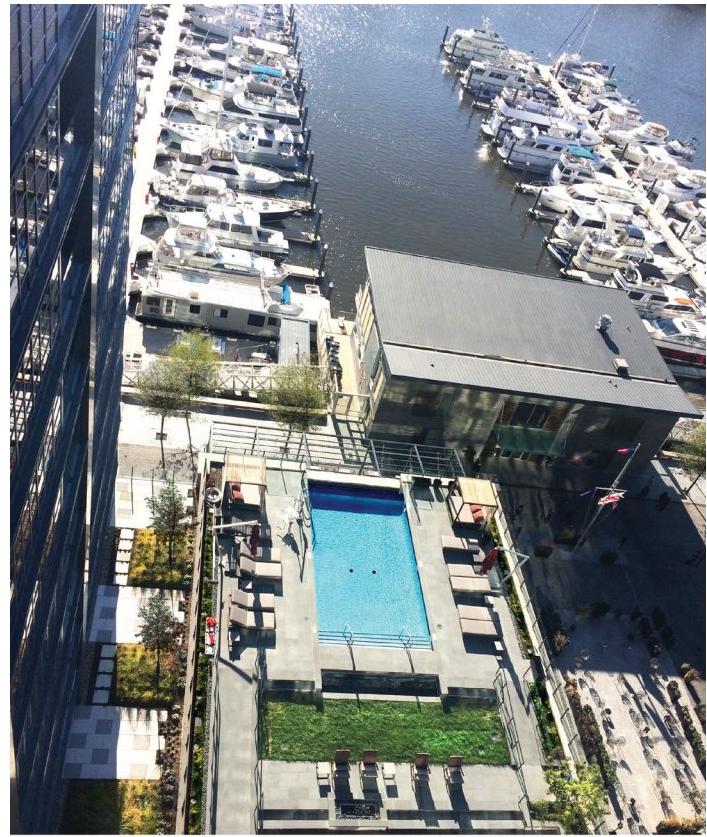
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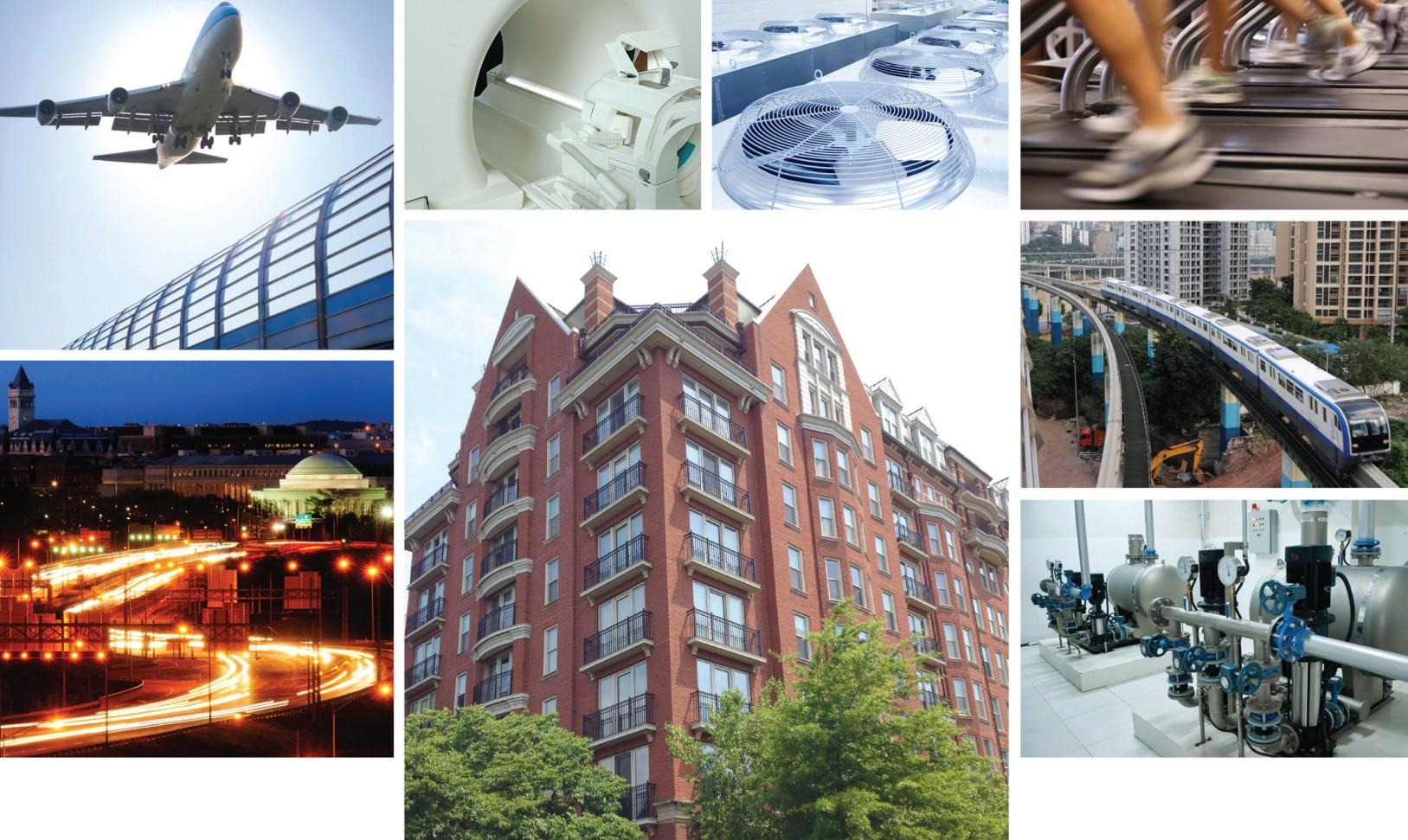
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